SPEECHES AND LETTERS

of

GERRIT SMITH

1843-1873

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Pittsboro, March 15, 1843

To the People of the Town of Smithfield:

At the recent Town Meeting, you again refused to elect men for Commissioners of Excise, who are willing to license dram-selling. You did right. Oceans of tears; deep groans, that freight every wind; graves in every cemetery; and the most wretched and loathsome beings in every neighborhood;—testify that dram-drinking is morally wrong. But, if dram-drinking is morally wrong, so must be dram-selling; and if that, so must be the licensing of dram-selling; and if that, so must be the selection of men for our agents, who, in their agency, will license it. It is plain, that we have no more moral right to choose for a Commissioner of Excise a man who, we have reason to believe, is willing to license dram-selling, than we have to elect a man to office who will, probably, wield his official power for the continuance of slave laws—for the continuance of the most stupendous of all frauds, the most atrocious of all piracies, on human rights. If it be true, and it is, that the man does thereby make himself guilty of the sin of slaveholding who votes, as in the one case of the supposition just made; so is it also true, that the man who votes, as in the other case, does thereby render himself guilty of the sin of drunkenness. Many, who dwell on the duty of comprising our efforts for temperance within the limits of moral suasion, allow themselves to vote against it. But, whenever they vote against temperance—that is, whenever they vote for men who, they have a right to expect, will license dram-selling—they upset their dish of moral suasion as completely as those sham abolitionists do theirs, who are no less diligent to improve their opportunities to cast votes which, however intended, will tell *for* slavery, than they are to improve their opportunities to talk and pray *against* the abomination. When will men cease from the absurd attempt of drawing a line between their politics and their religion? When will they come to believe, that a man's politics are a part of his religion, and that hence his politics can be no better than his religion? When will they see how vain is the hope, that they can be giving their worship to God, at the same time that they are giving their politics to the Devil?

I referred to your recent refusal to grant dram-selling licenses. But, notwithstanding this repeated refusal, dram-selling is continued in your town. There are men amongst us so greedy of gain, so unscrupulous as to the means of acquiring it, and withal so lawless, as to perpetrate this transgression of both human and divine laws. And, because there are such men, the remark is not unfrequently made, that you might about as well license as refuse to license dram-selling. This is, however, a very unwise remark. I can infinitely better afford to have a hundred men in my house cursing and swearing without my consent, than one cursing and swearing with it. So too you can infinitely better afford to have a hundred men of your town selling drams without your consent, than one doing so with it. And I add, that the harm he does, who sells drams against your will, is not a hundredth part as great as it would be if he had the concurrence of your will. As to the argument, that our Town treasury would be benefitted by granting licenses to sell drams—I can only say, that I would as soon see in that treasury the thirty pieces of silver which rewarded Judas, as the tears-stained and blood-stained dollers of the dram-seller.

The strong arm of the law has been invoked to restrain our lawless townsmen, who are guilty of the crime of dram-selling. Why that arm has thus far proved impotent, and why it is like to continue to do so, is a question involving too many considerations to admit of an easy decision. I advert to what I deem the most important of these considerations, when I say, that there is a common impression that there should be no laws to restrain the traffic in intoxicating liquors. Such laws are very extensively regarded as an impertinent interference with the natural right of men to buy and sell property. This is one reason, if not indeed the principal reason, why the enforcement of them against our offending townsmen has been unavailing. That enforcement being looked upon as an invasion of their natural rights, has accomplished little else than to present these townsmen in the light of persecuted men, and to enkindle the public sympathy for them. For this reason, not a few of us, who are decidedly hostile to dram-selling, no longer show any favor toward the attempt to restrain by legal force the selfish, lawless men, who are guilty of this crime:—and, without presuming to condemn this application of force, we nevertheless venture to declare that, in our judgment, there is "a more excellent way." This "more excellent way" is to make an experiment on the power of unaided simple moral suasion to put an end to dram-selling in our town.

Great honor is accorded to our town for having led the way, ten years ago, in the reformation of drunkards by the simple and sole means of kind moral influence. Let us trust to this influence for reforming the dram-seller also. I admit that we have already tried it on him. But we have not tried it to the extent of its power; and we have combined legal force with it. Let us now drop the force, and confine our efforts within the limits of persuasion.

Shall we succeed, if we adopt the proposed change? The answer to this question turns on the answer to the question, whether we shall prove ourselves to be well indoctrinated and hearty in the cause of temperance. If our concern for this cause is not enough to induce us to plead earnestly and frequently with the dram-seller to relinquish an occupation which beggars families and breaks hearts, and kills bodies and kills souls—he will be like to continue in that occupation of blood-red-guiltiness. And frequent and seemingly earnest as may be these pleadings, if they are not sustained by a corresponding life, they will fail of a good effect. Let no man flatter himself that he is contributing to break up dram-shops, if he spends his leisure hours in them; or if indeed he give to them the sanction of his unnecessary presence for a single moment. Let no man think that his influence is against the continuance of dram-shops, if he cannot respond to the remark of the celebrated Judge Daggett of Connecticut, that they deserve to be classed with "the depositories of stolen goods," and to have inscribed in great capitals, over their doors: "The way to Hell, going down to the chambers of death." Let no man think that he is exerting an influence against dram-shops, if his temperance feeling be so shallow as to be offended by the memorable prediction of our Chancellor Walworth, that "the time will come, when reflecting men will no more think of making and vending ardent spirits, than they would now think of poisoning the well from which a neighbor obtains water for his family, or of

arming a maniac to destroy his own life or the lives of those around him." Let me add, that if the farmers of Smithfield would make the evidences of their heartfelt temperance irresistible to the dram-seller—as irresistible as the rays of a Summer's sun to the ice on which they fall—let them, as not only their duty but their interest dictates, separate themselves, wholly and forever, from the manufacture of the body and soul-destroying poison. They are, thank Heaven, impressed with the horrors of Southern slavery: so much so, that they would not, for the world, contribute one link to the chain which should bind the most despised of all its victims. Why then should they consent to have a share, however small, in binding the victims of intemperance—the victims of a slavery which is a thousand fold more dreadful than that of the South?

I referred to the interest of our farmers. How strange, that any of them should think it to be for their interest—their pecuniary interest—to sustain a manufacture, whence flows a National impoverishment, rivalled only by that which flows from Southern slavery! Were the hundreds of thousands in this land who, because of the vice of intemperance, are, along with their dependant and far more numerous kindred, but half-fed and half-clothed—were they to come under the renovating power of the Temperance Reformation, a new demand for the productions and for the farms of our farmers, such as no tariff nor other legislative device could make any approach to, would thereby be created. The spring which this transformation of character would give to our agricultural, manufacturing and commercial prosperity, would be as if a new nation were called into being upon our shores. From what immense burdens of rum-engendered poverty and rum-engendered crime would our farmers be released, were this manufacture of liquid fire for a beverage to cease!

There is no danger that brothels and gambling-houses will be openly set up in Peterboro or Siloam. Why? Because it is well known that they would not be able to endure the frowns of the public countenance. But, let that countenance be clothed with such withering frowns toward our dram-shops, and they would quickly die. Oxygen is not more essential to animal life, than a favoring public opinion to dram-shops. One of the Hebrew definitions of a lie is, "a body without legs." But a greater lie there is not in all the world, than that a dram-shop is needful: and just so soon, therefore, as respectable people refuse to furnish it legs, it will cease to go.

Let us then, at least for a year or two, try the power of simple moral influence against dram-selling. Let us, with hearts of love and pity for him and his wronged and perilled family, beseech the dram-seller to abandon his guilty occupation. With such hearts toward the poor drunkards who frequent his house of death, and toward our beloved youth who are endangered by its attractions, let us plead for this abandonment. And, above all, let the proofs which our actions afford of our deep and abiding abhorrence of his occupation be such, that he cannot doubt the sincerity and earnestness with which our lips testify against it.

May the love of God and the love of man so prevail in our hearts over the love of gain and of popularity and of sensual indulgence, as to prompt us to array the whole influence of our example, and the effective and triumphant, because the *whole* influence of our example, against the body and soul-destroying occupation of the dram-seller.

Very respectfully, your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

"*In the beginning of the Gospel, whosoever had received the spirit of Christ, was esteemed a member of the Church. But now (in the 16th century) the order was inverted: and no one, unless a member of the Church, was counted to have received the spirit of Jesus Christ.*"

D'Aubigne's Hist. of the Reformation, (vol. I, p 21.)

CHURCH OF PETERBORO.

The 29th day of November, 1843, was observed as a day of fasting and prayer by persons in Peterboro (N. Y.) and its vicinity, who believe that the christians therein do, simply because they are christians—do, of mere Divine organization, all human arrangements to the contrary notwithstanding—constitute "The Church of Peterboro." In the after part of that day, they held a public meeting in the Session room in Peterboro, and spent the time of it in prayer, reading the bible, singing and conversation. A creed and a series of resolutions were submitted to the meeting, with the request that they should be made the subject of much and earnest thought, conversation, and prayer, until the time for definitive action on them.

The meeting was adjourned to the second day of the following month.

At the adjourned meeting, a part of the time of which was spent in prayer, singing and conversation, the creed and resolutions, submitted to the former meeting, were read, commented on, and unanimously adopted. Near the close of the meeting, the request was made that all who, in view of the doctrines and language of the creed, believe themselves to be members of "The Church of Peterboro," should give their names to the Secretary of the Meeting. In accordance with this request, a number of persons gave their names.

The creed and resolutions are as follows:

CREED.

We learn from the Holy Scriptures, which are the only infallible guide in all questions of morality and religion, that Christian and Church relations spring, not from external fellowship and human arrangements, but from the union of those who are the subjects of such relations with Jesus Christ, who is "the Head of the body, the Church."—(Col. i. 18; Eph. iv. 15, 16; Eph. v. 23, 30; John xv. 5; 1st Peter ii. 4, 5, 6; Eph. ii. 20; Rom. xii. 4, 5: vii. 4.) Hence we believe, that the Church of Christ on earth is composed of all the Christians on earth; that the Church of Christ in any nation is composed of all the Christians in such nation; and that the Church of Christ in any smaller community, even down to a single family, (Rom. xvi. 5; 1st Cor. xvi. 19,) is composed of all the Christians in such community. Thus believing, we declare that the Christians of Peterboro and its vicinity compose a Church; and that, following Apostolic usage, we may properly call it "The Church of Peterboro."—(The propriety of this name, and also the propriety of declaring that *all* the Christians of a given locality constitute the Church of such locality, are justified by the following and other texts: Rom. i. 7; 1st Cor. i. 2; Eph. i. 1; Phil. i. 1, connected with Phil. iv. 15; Col. i. 2; in 2d and 3d Rev., "Church of Ephesus," &c. &c.) As a consequence of the beliefs which we have expressed, we acknowledge ourselves bound—not to vote into our local Church, (for we can neither vote into it nor vote out of it,)—but bound to recognise as a member of it every person within our territorial limits, who affords satisfactory evidence that he is a disciple and friend of Christ—and bound too to do this, even in the case of those who do not consent to our thus recognizing [illegible] and even in the case of those also who, in their doctrines or practices, or both, are peculiar, unso[illegible]al, blameworthy, be it to whatever extent it may. Another consequence of the beliefs which we have expressed is, that, whilst we are to maintain a strict Church discipline, and to admonish and rebuke each other as occasion shall call for such fidelity, we are to deem no persons worthy of being disfellowshipped by us but those whom we have ceased to regard as Christians.

RESOLUTIONS

1st. Resolved, That

be Deacons of this Church.

2d. Resolved, That Samuel Wells of Vernon is affectionately invited to remove into this community, and thereby become a member of this Church; and that, in the event of such removal, he be expected to officiate as its Elder or Bishop, and to assume that share in instructing and feeding it which is appropriate to one whom the Holy Ghost hath made an overseer (Acts xx. 28).

3d. Resolved, That, in view of the abundant means of living in this neighborhood, we hope our Elder may always be in circumstances to give himself "continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts vi. 4). But, whether such shall be his circumstances, or whether he shall be compelled to "labor, working with his own hands" (1st Cor. iv. 12), we cannot, without guiltily shutting our eyes to the glaring evils of the practice of subscribing salaries to preachers of the gospel, promise him a salary. We trust that contributions in money will be made in our place of worship from Sabbath to Sabbath; and that the Deacons, in their appropriation of these contributions—a part to this needy disciple and a part to that—a part to one object and a part to another—will pay especial and constant regard to the wants of the Elder and his family.

4th. Resolved, That the Elder be expected to keep an account of all the contributions, whether in moneys or otherwise, which shall be made to him by his Church and Congregation; and that he be expected to make a public and full report thereof, at the expiration of every three months.

5th. Resolved, That for the edification both of its members and others—for the honoring and establishing of the truth—this Church will, as there shall be occasion for it, express its convictions in relation to doctrines and practices.

6th. Resolved, That a Church of Christ is a company of moral reformers; and, therefore, that a Church which refuses to engage in the prosecution of moral reforms, especially those that are nearest at hand and most urgent, is, however excellent may be the character of individuals in it, not a Church of Christ.

7th. Resolved, That sectarianism, guilty as it so clearly is of rending the seamless garment (John xix. 23) of the Saviour—of dividing the Church of Christ into mutually warring parties—of tearing asunder those who should esteem themselves to "be one," even as the Father and the Son "are one" (John xvii. 22); guilty also, as it so clearly is, of making the strongest and most successful appeals to the pride, bigotry, and intolerance of the heart; is, therefore, the mightiest foe on earth to truth and reform, to God and man; and is, in its features and spirit, one of the most marked children of its "father, the Devil."

8th. Whereas there is a prevailing delusion, that a Union Church requires a surrender of private judgment and a compromise of truth; and that but for this surrender and compromise, the contentions in such Church would be too great to be endured: Resolved, therefore, That the members of a Union or Gospel Church are not only free to entertain their respective views, both of doctrine and practice, but are bound to inculcate them on their brethren, and to rebuke the rejection of them; and resolved, further, that whilst, on the one hand, such freedom and faithfulness do not only not engender fatal strife, but do actually produce assimilation of character and that true peace which follows purity (James iii. 17), the barriers which sectarianism erects do, on the other hand, by hindering the mutual access, and fomenting the mutual jealousies, of Christians, obstruct the progress of truth, and maintain an increasing disagreement of sentiments and opposition of spirit between those who are commanded to be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1st Cor. i. 10), and to merge their diversities of character even in oneness itself (John xvii. 21, 22, 23).

9th. Resolved, That although, as is evident from the 15th chapter of Acts, there are occasions which justify the assembling of christians together from different parts of a country, or from different parts of the world, to discuss and decide on questions of religious interest; nevertheless, for a local Church to refuse to come into an Association of Churches, is a wise precaution for preserving its independence and purity.

10th. Whereas the mob which, in the year 1842, disgraced this community, and which is justly supposed to be the most fruitful cause of the disorders and lawlessness that have subsequently prevailed amongst us, was approved, rather than condemned, by the great majority of our professing christians: Resolved, therefore, That this Church feels itself loudly called on to declare that mob to have been, what every other mob is, a most flagrant outrage on human and divine laws—on the rights of man and the rights of God.

11th. Whereas there are in this community professing christians, as well as other persons, who defend the use of intoxicating liquors as a drink; and who also defend the selling of grain to the brewer and distiller: Resolved, therefore, That this Church condemns such defences as unscriptural and wicked; and pronounces the selling of such liquors for a drink—the licensing of the sale of them for that purpose—the election of officers who license the sale of them for that purpose—the manufacture of such liquors for that purpose—and the furnishing of materials for the manufacture of them for that purpose—to be all parts, one of them as certainly so as another, in that great and horrid work of death, which has already destroyed the bodies and souls of millions of our countrymen.

12th. Whereas there are professing christians amongst us who patronize Missionary and other Societies, which solicit contributions from slaveholders: Resolved, therefore, That such professing christians cannot be sinless, unless God has repealed his declaration: "I hate robbery for burnt-offering." (Isaiah lxi. 8.)

13th. Whereas there are in this community professing christians, as well as others, who vote to fill civil offices with slaveholders, and with persons who wield their official power in behalf of the most murderous and diabolical oppression of millions of God's poor: Resolved, therefore, That it is the duty of this Church to declare such voting to be very guilty treason toward the cause of humanity and the cause of God. And whereas the criminality of such voting is partially, or entirely, hidden to many eyes by plausible excuses—such as that, there cannot be great sin in voting with a large party—in voting as thousands and millions vote—such as that, the person voted for, although on the side of the oppressor, will nevertheless, if elected, accomplish in his office more good than evil, and will wisely conform himself to the maxim which requires the securing of "the greatest good to the greatest number": Resolved, therefore, That God has left His admonitions—"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Ex. xxiii. 2); "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished" (Prov. xi. 21)—for the very purpose of teaching men that they cannot hide themselves and escape from responsibility in a crowd; and that, in the light of these admonitions and of other Divine instructions, the whole sin of electing a tyrant, or an upholder of tyranny, rests on each of the votes, as well as on the sum of the votes, which elect him: And Resolved, further, That so long as the maxim should be, not "the greatest good of the greatest number," but "the greatest good of the whole number;" and so long as Christianity forbids our seeking the good even of a universe, at the expense of the least right of the least being in it,—it cannot be proper to clothe a person with official power, when we foresee that it will be employed to wrong, though it may be, but a single individual, and that too the obscurest individual among the millions subject to such power: And Resolved, further, That if the consideration that he will exercise his official power justly toward others of his fellow men, can authorize us to set up a tyrant over some of them,—then, by the like reasoning, can that tyrant derive from the justice of his dealings with some persons a license to be unjust toward others; then can the adulterer, the slaveholder, the murderer, be able to vindicate their adultery, slaveholding, and murder, if they can but prove that the harm which they have done to some of their fellow-beings by these crimes, is overbalanced by the benefit which, in whatever ways, they have done to others of them. To illustrate and justify the positions of this Resolution, we say, that whoever would estimate the measure of his own sin against the tens of thousands of slaves in the District of Columbia and in the Territory of Florida, for having voted to fill the Office of President of the United States with a tyrant, who uses the power of that Office to retain in slavery those tens of thousands, should hold out of view every other vote cast for that tyrant except his own, and make his own wholly responsible for the election; and should, also, hold out of view all, however good or bad, of the official acts and influences of that tyrant, save only such as bear upon those tens of thousands of slaves.

14th. Whereas there is, even amongst professors of religion, a prevailing opinion that it is wrong to preach politics on the Sabbath: Resolved, That the correctness of this opinion turns wholly on the character of the politics which are preached: for, whilst it is clearly wrong to preach anti-bible or unrighteous politics on the Sabbath, or on any other day, nothing can be clearer than that no day is too holy to be used in preaching the politics which are inculcated in the bible.

To the persons who derive title from myself or my late father to land in Charlotte River and Byrne's Tracts, in the Counties of Delaware, Otsego, and Schoharie:

FELLOW-CITIZENS:

You have recently been informed, that your above title is bad. But, if Indians are your only informants, you surely need not be uneasy. Indians are unfit to investigate land titles, and to expound the laws of civilized communities. I am, however, aware that it is strongly suspected that these, who call themselves, and dress themselves, and arm themselves, like Indians, are disguised white persons. But, whilst the fact that they are *white* persons, would not prove that they are competent to instruct you in matters which require extensive law-learning: the fact of their disguise is, of itself, sufficient reason why you should not confide in them. They who assume a false character, do, by such assumption, disentitle themselves to our confidence. Honest men, seeking honest ends by honest means, are open and frank, not dissembling and masked. From your Indian advisers therefore, be their Indianism genuine or pretended, it is manifestly your duty to turn away.

Perhaps, however, you are concerned about the title to your lands, and do, therefore, wish me to give you my opinion of it. Now, to tell you the truth—though to tell it may but increase your uneasiness—I have never made any, not even the slightest examination of the title which my father acquired to the lands in question. The great reason I have for supposing it to be good, and I have not the least doubt that it is perfectly good, is that, notwithstanding some fifty years have passed away since my father purchased and paid for these lands, I never heard from him nor from any other person, that his title was at all questionable. Even the Indians, who are so busy in enlightening you, have never so much as hinted to me that this title is bad, or in any wise suspicious. And I would here say, that it would have been but civil in them to have communicated with me on the subject of the title, before they took up arms against it. Perhaps, however, they will plead that Indians are not to be governed by the laws and customs of civility.

I cheerfully admit that, whenever I shall have reason to doubt the title which my father obtained, it will be my duty to investigate it. I do not mean that it will be my duty to investigate it myself—for I am not a lawyer. It will not be my duty to get Indians to investigate it—for Indians are not lawyers. But it will be my duty to assign the task to men who are learned in the law. And I add, that if they shall find the title to be bad, I will, without the delay and cost of litigation, abandon it, and do all in my power to repair the losses which you shall suffer from such failure of title. Do you ask when, in my judgment, "I shall have reason to doubt the title!" I answer, that I shall have reason to doubt it whenever either yourselves, or your Indian advisers, or any other persons, shall lay before me the written opinion of a lawyer of known ability and integrity, that the title is not good. To expect that I shall put myself to the pains and expense of inquiring into my land titles, whenever A, B, or C, Tom, Dick, or Harry, shall clamor against them; or whenever these titles shall encounter the violence of a mob, is most unreasonable. For it is certainly not every individual who is competent to pass upon the merits of a land-title; and as to mobs, they prove nothing else than the lawlessness and wickedness of those who compose them. This is the best that can be said of any mob—be it a mob against abolitionists or against land-owners.

I trust that you will all admit that the condition on which I propose to go to the pains and expense of examining the title in question, is perfectly reasonable. I will add to what I have said, that I shall not be displeased to hear that you are getting it examined. I go farther, and invite such examinations; and I assure you, that the more searching and speedy they are, the more I shall like them. If there are defects, remediable or irremediable, in any of my father's or my own land titles, I wish them discovered—and discovered now, rather than hereafter—during my life, rather than after it. I beg that the debts, which some of you owe me, may not be suffered to restrain the proposed examinations. Nay, I beg that none of you will, because they are indebted to me, feel the least hesitancy in speaking against either my title or myself—and in speaking against them, too, as unjustly as it may be in their hearts to do. For I hope that no measure of injustice, which I should receive at the hands of those who owe me money, would hinder me from being just and kind towards them.

And now, that I have referred to the debts which some of you owe me, I would say, that whoever of you is my debtor, and has a doubt of the sufficiency of the title in question, may have six months in which to investigate the title, and to confirm, or get rid of, his doubt. During this time, he need pay me nothing; and of course he will pay me nothing after its expiration, if he shall have come to believe that the title is bad.

I learn that the Indians, who, offering themselves as your legal advisers, should at least be law-abiding men, are in fact so lawless as to enter upon my wood-lands, and destroy and carry away my timber. This is a crime which I have no right to overlook; and which, I may add, you have no right to overlook. It is your duty, and I trust you will admit it, to assist me in detecting, and in visiting with the utmost penalties of the law, those who are guilty of this crime. I care not to know who they are that impeach my land titles, or conspire against me. For such impeachment and such conspiracy I shall never trouble them. But I do strongly desire to know who they are that, coveting the timber on my lands, deny my title to them, and then claim the timber as their reward for the bravery of this denial. It is certainly a short way to riches which they have discovered, who claim as their own whatever property they may choose to deny the right of others to. But, so far from its being an honest way, never was there a scheme of robbery more profligate and indecent. Your Indian advisers profess to be actuated by a regard for yourselves. But the liberty which they take with my timber—timber which, if not mine, is certainly not theirs—enables you to judge of the sincerity and disinterestedness of that regard.

With warm and unabated desire for your prosperity, I remain your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

PETERBORO, May 24, 1844.

4

PETERBORO, February 1st, 1845

Hon. F. WHITTLESEY *of Rochester,*—

DEAR SIR,—

The newspapers inform me of the plan of having higher rates of toll on the Oswego, than on the Western part of the Erie Canal: and they, also, inform me of your public advocacy of it. I can but wonder, that such a plan should find favor with such a man.

Your arguments for the plan do not surprise me. It is fit, that the arguments for an absurd position should be as absurd, as the position itself. Hence, in making their character correspond with, and worthy of, the character of your subject, you have shown your sense of the suitable, and honored the wisdom, which is so justly ascribed to you. I shall, therefore, expose the absurdity of your arguments, not with any design against your merited reputation for wisdom—for, as I have already intimated, this absurdity serves to establish, rather than to shake, that reputation: but, I shall make the exposure, because, as these arguments have been put forth by a well-trained mind; and are, hence, in keeping with the plan, which they are intended to recommend, they go far to denote the character of that plan. The false reasonings of a wise man in favor of a given measure are, by no means, valueless, because false. Their very falsity gives them value, inasmuch as it argues, and to an extent commensurate with his wisdom, the unsoundness of the measure. The empty arguments of Frederick Whittlesey *for* the proposed discrimination in tolls are, because of the source whence they come, effective arguments *against* that discrimination. If there is a measure in behalf of which the wise cannot use their wisdom, it is because the measure is folly. If Frederick Whittlesey cannot talk and write good sense in behalf of the project under consideration, it must be because the very nature of the project forbids it.

You contend against the use of the Oswego Canal for the Western trade, on the ground, that not it, but the Erie, was made for that trade. You have bought a cat to kill your rats; and you, now, buy another to kill your mice. But the latter proves the better cat for both purposes. Nevertheless, you conclude, that, inasmuch as she was not bought for such big game, she shall not be permitted to kill your rats. Unsound as is the logic, which leads you to this conclusion, it is the very logic by which you forbid the participation of the Oswego Canal in the Western trade. That little Canal—that "mere side-cut"—as you contemptuously call it, was not made for big business; and, hence, however competent to do it, it shall not do it.

Another reason, why you would not allow any share of the Western trade to prefer the Oswego to the Erie Canal, is that the latter was made at "great expense." You have, doubtless, joined in the public laughter at the reluctance of my brother Dutchmen to give up their old fashioned ploughs for however great improvements in that department of farming; and at the unwillingness of the former navigators of the Mississippi to see their clumsy craft displaced by the Steam Boat. Nevertheless, the chief reason for the tenacity in both of these cases was but the same, as one of the reasons, which prompt you to cling so exclusively to the Erie Canal. Those old fashioned ploughs were made at "great expense!" So, too, that clumsy craft! The Erie Canal also! To an unbiassed mind, however, preference in these instances is to be decided by a comparison of merits. Which is the better kind of plough? Is the swift, majestic, Steam Boat, or one of its rudely constructed and snail-paced predecessors, most worthy of the "Father of Rivers?" Is the Buffalo route more advantageous, than the Oswego, for every portion of the Western trade? If the Dutchman cleave to his old plough, he will, notwithstanding the fatness of his alluvial lands, see his Yankee competitor on the hills, who is less jealous of innovation, outstrip him in the race for riches. The former craft of the Mississippi might have been retained to the exclusion of modern improvements in navigation; but the Mississippi would thereby have lost her commerce. So, too, if the Erie Canal is the only Canal in our State, which is allowed a share of the Western trade; a part, if not indeed, all of that share may thereby be jeoparded. But, what I have said under this last head is, perhaps, not all pertinent:—for, whichever be preferable for the Western trade, the Erie or the Oswego Canal, neither should be disallowed to participate in it.

Another of your positions is, that to permit Western trade to pass on the Oswego Canal "is particularly unjust to Western New-York." You justify this position by the fact, that the cheaper the transportation to market of the productions of the Western States, the greater will be the reduction in the prices of the like productions of Western New-York. The friends of your project are especially concerned to have the competition of the wheat of the Western States with the wheat of Western New-York as light as possible. If the farmers of Western New-York wish to get one dollar and twenty-five cents a bushel for their wheat delivered in the City of New York, it is very natural for them to desire, that the transportation of the wheat of the Western States to that City should be so expensive, as to make its owners losers, if they sell it, any thing short of that price. But Western New-York should remember, that the Erie Canal, although made by the whole State, and for the whole State, has yielded but little benefit to any other part, if we except a few Eastern Cities. Its almost exclusive enjoyment of gains from the Erie Canal for a quarter of a century should make it willing, that other parts of the State have their turn of good from our "Internal Improvements." Does the Oswego Canal render the productions of the Western States cheaper to the people of our State, than, but for that Canal, they would be?—cheaper, too, than the like productions of the Western Canal Counties of our State have hitherto been afforded? Let this excite no jealousy in those Counties: but, let it be remembered by them, that the consumers in our State are more numerous than the producers of the staple of those Counties; that its landless are more numerous than its landowners; and its poor more numerous than its rich. In short, let the farmers of the Western Canal Counties generously bear in mind, that, much as they are themselves interested in the maintenance of high prices, it is a majority of the people of this State, to whom low prices of food, rather than high, are a blessing. You ask for a legislation, which shall advance the price of breadstuffs in our State, when you ask to have the Oswego Canal interdicted to the Western trade. I am aware, that the Carriers of Buffalo and Rochester are the persons most clamorous for that interdiction. They were the first to clamor for it. They are the nucleus of the party in favor of it. But, if not seconded by the wheat-growers of Western New-York, they would as soon think of compassing any other impossibility, as of effecting the proposed discrimination in tolls. I said, that you ask for a legislation, which shall advance the price of breadstuffs. And have you never thought how great a crime it is to make bread scarce to the mouths of God's poor? For the Government of our State to exert its power against the poor, and to make the "staff of life" still more difficult of their obtainment, would be to perpetrate a crime, at the bare thought of perpetrating which it should shudder, and at the bare thought of asking it to perpetrate which you also should shudder. Humanity and Heaven require some better reason for shutting up the Oswego Canal against the Western trade than the reason, that this Canal cheapens the price of bread in our State. And, yet, so it is, as your candor will admit, that, but for that reason, the party for thus shutting up this Canal could not have been rallied. God be praised for the Oswego Canal, if the charge of its enemies, that it makes food cheap, be true. All the evil it can do will not overbalance this good. There can be no more honorable testimony in behalf of the "Internal Improvements" of our State, than that they make bread plenty and cheap within her borders.

In reply to my charge, that you would make food dear to the poor, you will, perhaps, say, that this consequence can be avoided by making the discrimination in tolls consist, not in increasing the rates of toll on the Oswego Canal, but in diminishing them on that part of the Erie Canal, which is West of Syracuse. I suppose your proposition would be to remit four fifths of the tolls on that part of the Erie Canal. I suppose so, because the other proposition is to make the Oswego Canal pay five times as high rates of toll, as the West two hundred miles of the Erie Canal. But, can you believe, for a moment, that our State, heavily laden with debt, as she is, would consent to such an extensive, or, indeed, to any considerable, diminution of her income from the Erie Canal? Still more difficult must you find it to believe, that the Western Canal Counties, which, with few exceptions, have had the exclusive enjoyment of the benefits of the Erie Canal, can have the impudence to ask, that this enjoyment be now followed up with the favor of their well nigh free use of their part of that Canal. Do you tell me, that the remission of tolls will be on the Western trade

nally, and not on that, which, for convenience sake, I may call the Home trade? A sufficient reply is, that the distinction cannot be maintained. The name and the show of this distinction would, doubtless, be kept up: for the knavery, that evaded the distinction itself, would, for the very purpose of covering the evasion, be industrious to keep up the name and the show of the distinction.

The advocates of the proposed discrimination in tolls make fair faces for themselves, by saying, that they are prompted to apply for it by their belief, that such discrimination is indispensable to prevent the rapid diminution of income from the Erie Canal. To make the application, however, whilst the income is increasing, and fast increasing, is, to say the least, premature. But, for that portion of our State, which is more loud and frequent, than any other, in asking the State to sink itself deeper in debt by further expenditures on objects of "Internal Improvement;" and which, moreover, refers to the growing productiveness of the Erie Canal to reconcile the public mind to the idea of such expenditures: for that portion of the State, I say, to sing so different a tune in the same breath, and to dwell so doleefully on the ill-doing and darkened prospects of the Erie Canal, is, certainly, to hazard its reputation for uprightness and sincerity.

That the Canals of our State should, if possible, be made to pay her unhappily incurred debt, is admitted. That, providing it can be paid in that way, and in no other; the rate of tolls upon them should be increased, is also admitted. But, circumstances are changed; and the question is, no longer, how high, but how low, shall be the rate of tolls on our Canals, to the end of their being made most productive. A dozen years ago, and we might, almost, have lamented, that, for the sake of having more miles to charge with tolls, a more serpentine course had not been given to the Erie Canal. But, now, we would cut across its bends, and make it as short as possible. Time was, that we could talk of increasing the income from the Erie Canal, by increasing the rates of its toll: and we could talk so still, had it neither present, nor prospective, competition for the Western trade. But, now, that Philadelphia and Baltimore and New Orleans are putting in their strong claims for that trade; and, now, that the British Government is sparing no expense to draw the productions of the Western States down the St. Lawrence; the extent of income from the Erie Canal, and even from the Oswego Canal also, will, not improbably, so far as it shall be affected by the Western trade, be directly proportioned to the reduction of their rates of toll. It is a question, indeed, whether any, however great, reduction of those rates will avail to continue to us a large participation in that trade. The people of this State must have been very blind to what has, for several years, been going on around them, if they are now studying how to get a greater amount of tolls from a given amount of Western trade. They might, rather, be devising and creating new attractions to that trade. Instead of filling up the Oswego Canal, which, as respects the Western trade, you would, virtually, have take place; it may yet, and ere long too, be found necessary to enlarge it, if we would save ourselves from the total loss of that trade. If the Black River Canal promises a cheaper route, than the Oswego, for the Western trade, it may be found necessary to hasten the completion of that Canal: and, if the projected Sodus Canal invites us to a still cheaper route; then, to catch the prize for which so many are striving, we may find it indispensable to build the Sodus Canal: and, if no Canal shall serve to bring that prize within our grasp; then, it is not improbable that our hopes will centre upon the New-York and Erie Rail Road. Nothing short of the pressure of a heavy debt upon the resources of our State should make us hesitate to reduce the rates of toll on our Canals one half, or even three fourths, if need be to retain for our Buffalo and Rochester and Oswego and Syracuse and Utica and Troy and Albany and New-York the benefits of a large share of the Western trade. But, whilst that pressure exists, we must continue to impose a heavy tax on the trade of our own State, even though the imposition of the like rates of toll on the Western trade (for they could not be less on the latter than on the former) should cost us the utter loss of the Western trade. And I would here remark, that the present great efforts to divert the Western trade, in one direction and another, from our great Atlantic emporium furnish another occasion for lamenting the error of loading our State with debt. Were our State now free of debt, we could do all, that abatement in charges for the use of our Canals could do, to win the swelling commerce of the West; render it tributary to the growth of our great towns; and, so far as riches are an element in the public prosperity, make our whole commonwealth surpassingly prosperous. To say, that, in such case, the State would be without income from its Canals, would be to speak of a lack, which the growth of its great City, would alone supply, were her share in the Western trade to be a liberal one. The gain, in wealth and population, to our whole State, consequent on the rapidity, with which that City would, in such case, double and treble her inhabitants, would exceed the benefit to be derived from millions of tolls. Our State would then experience, in her commercial enrichment, how true, as well as terse, is the remark, that canals are made for commerce rather than for tolls.

We are strikingly admonished, in the present instance, of the power there is in concert and in appeals to local and sectional interests. The agitation of this question, whether the Oswego Canal ought not to be closed against the Western trade, began, as I have already said, with the Carriers of Buffalo and Rochester. Possibly, however, some of the Millers of Black Rock and Rochester, who would like to see the Millers of Oswego denied the right of sending to New-York their flour made of Western wheat, were not behind those Carriers. But, notwithstanding, they were but a handful, who began this movement; nevertheless, by acting in concert; by calling their private interest a public one; and by professing to seek the advantage of others, when, in fact, they were studying their own; they have succeeded in giving no little currency to their scheme. Thousands in Rochester and Buffalo, quick to believe, that what is the interest of their Forwarding Houses is the interest of their Cities, can easily bring their Cities to identify themselves with questions, which deeply affect such Houses. And, nothing, surely, is less strange, than that the neighborhoods of Rochester and Buffalo—than that Monroe, and Erie, and other Counties—should sympathize with those Cities; take their tone from them; and espouse their side of a question. Now, the feeling, with which the Carriers of Rochester and Buffalo have pervaded a considerable part of Western New-York, may, perhaps, run all along the Erie Canal region to Syracuse. Something of it may travel as far as Troy and Albany and New-York, waking up there to their own interests the partners of these Carriers, and the Commission Merchants of certain Millers; and enlisting hundreds of others in those Cities, who are, personally, concerned in the property and business of Rochester and Buffalo. Still, it will be found true, that, however wide this feeling may yet spread, it had its little origin—*little*, most emphatically, in spirit, as well as space—in the covetousness of the handful, to whom I have ascribed it. It will also be found, that it was indebted for its progress, mainly to the covering over of private purposes with professions of the public good. In adverting, as I have done, to the fact, that the Carriers of Buffalo and Rochester, already in possession of four fifths of the New-York State share of the Western trade, covet the other fifth, out of which the Carriers of Oswego get their scanty living; I am far from meaning to say, that they make any uncommon, or peculiarly guilty, exhibition of selfishness. From the time, that Ahab, though already surfeited with riches, fastened his greedy eye on the little possession of his poor neighbor Naboth, there have been no illustrations of my passion of the human heart more numerous than of its covetousness. The envious disposition, that cannot rest, until the little rills of business, which keep alive the humble village of Oswego, are turned into the commercial floods of Buffalo and Rochester, is a disposition, which, hateful as it is, has vexed the breasts of men in every age and every land. The jealousy, which, looking forth from the large and thriving towns, and rich waving fields, that adorn the almost matchlessly fertile banks of the Western half of the Erie Canal, sighs, that its crowd of boats does not also include the solitary ones, which, at long intervals, disturb the stagnant waters of the Canal, that crosses the sterile County of Oswego, is a "green-eyed monster," belonging to a very numerous race. I, again, disclaim the belief, that the Carriers of Rochester and Buffalo are peculiarly imperfect men: and I, cheerfully, admit too, that there is not more selfishness to be appealed to in Western New-York, than in other parts of our State. The like temptation elsewhere would produce the like revelation of character. We are all proud of our Rochester and Buffalo. We rejoice in their magnitude: and, when, as we have done, until the last few weeks, during which time they have felt interested in calling the public attention to the deep poverty, that has come upon them so suddenly and mysteriously—when, I say, we have read in their newspapers of the erection of several hundred buildings in each of those Cities, the last year, we have rejoiced in their continuing prosperity and growth. We admit too, that in their designs upon little, poverty-stricken, Oswego, these large and wealth-abounding towns can plead Scripture for their justification. "For whosoever hath to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but, whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." Oswego deserves to be devoured by big Rochester and big Buffalo, because she is so little—by rich Rochester and rich Buffalo, because she is so poor. Folks and places have no right to be little and poor: and, if they presume to be, they shall be punished for it. We see, by the way, that the letter of the Bible can be quoted in behalf of things, which are very opposite to its spirit.

The scheme you advocate will be promptly condemned by our Legislature. Wise and disinterested bodies will scout it from them. For, it is a scheme, to the glaring injustice of which none can be blind, but those, whose selfish, or whose local and sectional spirit it has enlisted. And should our State ever be so unfortunate, as to have a Legislature,

capable of being induced into the adoption of their scheme, a very little working of the scheme would prove it to be both impracticable and unavailing.

I say, in the first place, that it would be impracticable. You, of course, do not intend, that the productions of St. Lawrence, Jefferson and Oswego Counties, which find their way to market on the Oswego Canal, should be charged with the contemplated five fold rate of tolls; nor that the goods, sent by that route from the City of New-York to those Counties, should be thus burdened. There is, too, the Miller of Utica, or Troy, who has purchased ten thousand bushels of wheat in Ohio, and who would bring it to his mill through Oswego—I can hardly believe, that you would have him, a citizen of your own State, and the owner of the property, compelled to pay quintuple tolls on a Canal of his own State. But, would it not be found impossible to preserve a distinction between the property of the people of your own State and the property of the people of other States? To preserve it, you would require Boards of Inquisitors, as numerous and as odious, as those, which illustrated the folly, injustice, and madness of bygone times. One of the duties of one of these Boards would be to distinguish between the flour, which an Oswego Miller makes from Western wheat, and that, which he makes from wheat of his own State. Who can doubt, that every fraud would be practised to elude a distinction, sought to be made for purposes so unjust and hateful? Who can but fear, that such aggression on natural rights might exasperate the sufferers to resort even to bloody violence?

I say, in the second place, that your scheme would be unavailing. No sooner would it be adopted, than the Western States, justly indignant, would retaliate upon it with counteracting measures. No sooner would it be adopted, than the British Government would hesitate at no sacrifice to increase the business of the Welland Canal, and to attract the Western trade to Montreal. And, so it might turn out, between the countervailing measures of the British Government on the one hand, and those of the Western States on the other, that the scheme, got up to rob Oswego of her little share of the Western trade, and to add it to the great one already enjoyed by Buffalo and Rochester, resulted in the losing, instead of the increasing, of what those covetous Cities had. And so, too, it might turn out, through the force of these causes, that this scheme, got up, as is most probable, for the further purpose of disposing of the competition of the Oswego Mills, resulted in fresh advantages to those Mills, and in losses and long faces to the Millers of Black Rock and Rochester.

I observe, that the friends of your project, with the view of prejudicing the public mind against the Oswego route, stigmatize the Welland Canal as an "Alien Canal." But, it strikes me, that, while the objection to using an "Alien Canal" is altogether groundless and fanciful; the conversion of your own American brothers into Aliens—your treatment of them, as if they were Aliens—is deeply reprehensible. And does not the distinction, which your project would have made between the interests of the people of this State and of the people of the States West of it, amount to such a conversion?

Legislation by a State for the countervailing and destruction of the natural advantages of any section of it, is an enormously unjust, and palpably unconstitutional, invasion of natural rights. If the people of the hill-top would avail themselves of their better site for grinding their corn by wind; and the dwellers in the valley would use their water to grind theirs; let each party be left undisturbed in their respective advantage and preference: and, if the spirit of monopoly shall, on the one hand, demand that the water-mill be stopped, or, on the other, that the wind mill be; let not the law-making power, nor any other power, consent to gratify it. If the Oswego valley presents one of the natural routes for the Western trade, the Legislature has no more right to shut out that trade from it, than to cut off the legs and arms of the men, who inhabit it. Those men have as good a right to the natural advantages of their location, as they have to the limbs, with which they were born. You will say, however, that it is not proposed to shut it out, absolutely. To this I reply, that to shut it out is the very object—the sole object—of the agitation, to which you have so conspicuously and effectively contributed. Were the agitators to get the rates of toll on the Oswego Canal multiplied, not five only, but even ten, or twenty fold; if, nevertheless, Western trade should seek that route, they would have come short of their object—they would have accomplished nothing of that, on which their hearts are set. They would still "see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." Again, you will, perhaps, say, that the Oswego Canal belongs to the whole State, and not to the people of the Oswego valley. Admitted. But, it belongs to the State, not for the purpose of destroying, but improving, the natural advantages of the valley—not to be shut up, but to be used. The State has no more right to shut up that Canal, as you, in effect, would have it do so far as respects the Western trade, than it has to build a high and immovably strong wall across the whole width of it. Another of your defences, perhaps, will be to say, that the State is not bound to keep open its Canal in the Oswego valley, especially since it finds this Canal to be a rival to its far more important and expensive Canal. Admit it. Let the Government abandon the Oswego Canal, and fill it up too. All, that is claimed, is, that, if Government will not have a Canal of its own there, it shall not hinder the inhabitants of the Oswego valley from building one there. It is not denied—at least, not in this place, that Government has the right to appropriate, pay for, and build a mill on, the only mill-site in a given village. But, it is denied, that, having done so, it may lock up the mill, forbid its being used, and retain the site. A Turnpike Company apprehend, that there is a more favorable route for travel than that, on which they have built their road. They, accordingly, get a charter for a road on this more favorable route. They build it: and then, to compel all the travel to take the former road, they forbid the use of the latter. They have as much right to do this, as the State has to forbid the use of the Oswego Canal, and thereby prevent diversion from the Erie Canal.

It is not claimed, that Government is bound to improve the natural advantages of the Oswego valley. All, that is claimed, is, that it shall not forbid their being improved. Now, for Government to build a Canal in the Oswego valley, and impose rates of toll on it, so high, as to prevent its being used, would be, in effect, to say, that there shall be no canal there; and that the natural advantages for having one there shall not be improved. It would be to perpetrate a barefaced and monstrous violation of natural rights—a violation, which no Constitution can so far surmount natural rights, as to sanction.

In fine, it is contended, in view of the principles, which so obviously govern such cases, that, whenever the State shall impose discriminating or prohibitory duties (they are the same thing,) on one of its canals; the so doing is to be construed as an abandonment of that canal—as a surrender of it by the State to the people of the section, through which it passes. Let the Oswego Canal be thus surrendered to the people of Onondaga and Oswego Counties. If that people will not take the Canal, and keep it in repair; then let it go to ruin, and let them not complain of the State: for, surely, it would be unreasonable to require the State, after it had decided it to be unprofitable to do so, to retain the Canal any longer as the property of the State, and to keep it in repair.

The friends of your project will meet with a signal disappointment. Nevertheless, they will have done great harm. It is of unspeakable moment to the prosperity and happiness of a people, that they have confidence in the rectitude and impartiality of their Government. The emphatic veto of the Legislature on your immeasurably unjust project will, indeed, tend to preserve that confidence; but, it would have been more full, and more difficult to shake, had it been seen, that no portion of our citizens could hope for—could believe possible—such flagrant wrong, at the hands of its Government. The bare supposition, that Government can be treasonable toward the rights and interests of a part of its subjects, goes to sully its purity, and cast suspicion on its integrity. That a crime, so heinous, is not supposable, is a most touching and beautiful reason, why an ancient nation did not enact a law against parricide. It would have been more for the honor of our Government, as well as more for the confidence of the people in it, had no portion of them thought it possible for the Government to make itself guilty of the partial and unjust legislation, which the delusions of a sectional and local spirit, and the greediness and phrensy of avarice, are now calling for.

It must, also, be remembered, that, in this country, the people are identical with the Government. Therefore, if Government should increase the rates of toll on the Oswego Canal, the people of Onondaga and Oswego Counties would feel, that it was their fellow citizens—the other people of the State—who had done them this grievous wrong. And the Cities of Troy, Albany, and New-York, especially interested, as they are, in the freest and fullest use of the Oswego Canal, would, very naturally and justly, charge the measure, which jeopards and diminishes, if it does not certainly and entirely destroy, a vital portion of their trade, on their own fellow citizens—on their own brethren of their own State. What heart-burnings, jealousies, and bitter hatreds, would, in the event of the adoption of your project, exist between different portions of the people of our State, is more easily imagined than described.

Respectfully yours,

GERRIT SMITH.

To those Ministers in the County of Madison, who refuse to preach politics:

Bear with me. It is not to annoy you—it is not for any unworthy purpose—that I so often speak to you, and speak of you. It is again to entreat you to preach politics, that I come to you. My conviction, that the continued enslavement of millions in this Nation, is because its religious teachers will not preach politics, has lost none of its strength and earnestness, since I first began, and that was years ago, to urge you to preach politics. My conviction, that this refusal to preach politics does, more than aught else, peril our country, and threaten its utter ruin, is still among the deep and immovable convictions of my breast.

You will, perhaps, tell me, that it is useless to preach politics—that the experiment has been made, and made unsuccessfully. You will, perhaps, tell me, that I have myself preached politics, all over this County; and that, nevertheless, five sixths of its voters are willing to vote for slaveholders—for buyers and sellers of their fellow men. But, you should remember, that I am but a layman; and that such is public opinion and the state of society, that, when a layman turns religious teacher, he carries with him but little of the influence, and none of the authority, accorded to an appointed and ordained minister of the gospel. You should remember too, that you have arrayed yourselves against me, and done what you could to render odious, ridiculous, and vain, my poor attempts to supply your place, and preach the politics, which you should preach. So far from giving me your countenance, most of you vote for slaveholders. Alas, that you, who profess to be ambassadors of the Savior, should be guilty of putting the reins of Government into the hands of oppressors of the Savior's poor! You would not vote for sheep-thieves, comparatively petty, as you would yourselves call their crime, were one man to steal your children, and another your sheep:—how, then, can you justify your votes for men-thieves? You answer me, that, whilst the sheep-thief is despised, the slaveholder is respectable. I frankly admit, that he is respectable: and, with equal frankness, you should admit, that he would not be, if he had his due; and that they, who, by their votes, or otherwise, contribute to his respectability, take upon themselves a fearful responsibility. Have you never thought, that slavery cannot come to a bloodless termination, until the slaveholder has ceased to be respectable? This is as true, as that adultery will continue to abound, so long as the adulterer is respectable, and welcome to the most influential circles. There is a Janus-faced political party in this Nation, which, whilst at the South, as openly and boastfully proslavery as its rival, professes, at the North, to be antislavery: and this profession it makes, in the face of the fact, that what the election of a slaveholder, and the very prince of slaveholders, to the highest office in the gift of the people can do to make slaveholding respectable, it has just been striving, with all its might, to do.

You well know what "to preach politics" means, in my use of the phrase. The phrase is not original with myself. It has, for years, been customary to charge the few ministers, who are faithful enough to remind their hearers, by allusions however brief and indirect, of the antislavery politics of the Bible, with preaching politics. I wished to justify and honor those ministers: and, hence, I was willing to have my own inculcation of the politics of the Bible pass under the very same name, which was given to reproach theirs. You well know, that the charges of my playing the electioneering political partisan, when I preach politics, are as false and wicked, as they are frequent. You well know, how unfounded is the declaration, that it would be as proper to preach any other politics, as those I preach. You well know, that the politics I preach are the politics of the Bible—the politics, which declare, that "He that ruleth over men must be just," and not the most flagrant of robbers; that the ruler "is the minister of God," and not the servant of the Devil;—politics, which make it the duty of Civil Government, not to create and uphold the most grinding and bloody system of oppression, but to "Execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor." You well know too, that the politics of this Nation—the politics of its great political parties—the politics, which bind and beat and bruise the poor—are as unlike the politics of the Bible, as darkness is unlike light, as Hell is unlike Heaven. You well know too, that, in my preaching of politics, I present not the claims of any political party; make no appeals to selfishness; throw out no baits to ambition or avarice: but read what God says of Civil Government and the Civil Ruler, and argue, that Civil Governments and Civil Rulers should, in every age, conform to God's plain requirements of them.

One of your excuses for not preaching politics is, that political action is not the best means for overthrowing slavery. But, whether it be the best or poorest means to this end, or even no means at all, affects not the question of your duty to exhort your hearers to substitute the politics of the Bible for their unrighteous and oppressive politics. And, whether if men choose, as the Bible requires, "just" rulers, or rulers who withhold wages, whip women, and steal babies, slavery does or does not endure, the obligation to choose "just" rulers remains unimpaired and absolute.

In what other way, however, than by political action, can American slavery be overthrown? Moral suasion is, indeed, indispensable to the antislavery cause: but it is so, mainly because of the political action, which is its legitimate result. Water is indispensable to the mill; and so is human strength to the well doing of the young corn: but water, without the wheel on which to fall; and human strength, without the hoe in human hands, can no more cause the mill to move, or the corn to grow, than mere moral suasion can abolish slavery. The political action in the one case, and the wheel and the hoe in the others, are equally needful to give effect to the motive power:—and to divorce moral influence from the political action, in which it naturally results, is quite as absurd, as would be the experiment to make the mill turn by turning the water away from it, or the corn to grow by casting away the hoe.

The slavery, which Congress has, and that too in palpable violation of the Constitution, authorized in the District of Columbia, in our Territories, and under the National flag, is, manifestly, a slavery, which the whole American people are bound to overthrow; and how else, than by political action, shall they overthrow it? How too shall the people of Virginia and Georgia abolish Virginia and Georgia slavery, but by political action?

I am not forgetful of your scruples against employing political power for the subversion of slavery. But you must pardon my lack of respect for them. That Mr. Garrison, who scorns all political action under a Government, which takes life, should scorn it, even for the deliverance of the slave, is consistent. But, that those of you, who pollute your souls, by *voting up* slavery, should express doubts of your right *to vote it down;* that those of you, who are guilty of voting the power of the Nation *into* the hands of slaveholders, should question your right to vote it *out of* their hands, is a trial of our patience, which, should it provoke us to call you hard names, would be justly chargeable with at least ninety-nine hundredths of the blame of those names.

I must again pause to express my amazement and sorrow, that ministers and christians vote for slaveholders. Ministers of the gospel voting for slaveholders, when other ministers of the gospel are shut up in State Prisons for six, twelve, fifteen years, charged with no other offence than the humanity of helping poor slaves out of the clutches of slaveholders! Christians voting for slaveholders, when slaveholders are, every day, buying and selling christians! Well may we exclaim:

> "O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,
> And men have lost their reason!"

I know, that you would rather say, that it is the abolitionists, who are bereft of reason. It is but a few weeks, since a highly respectable minister of the gospel, whom, "from my youth up," I have known and honored and loved, told a friend of mine, that, on the subject of slavery, I am insane; and he added, as if to abate the wonder of my friend, that insanity runs in my family. The sanity of this minister has turned him against the "Niggers." My insanity has turned me toward them. The "Niggers," if no others, will decide, that, here is one case, in which it is better to be insane than sane.

A common complaint against my preaching politics is, that I am unauthorized and unfit to be a religious teacher. But, does not your omission to preach politics excuse, to some extent, well meaning attempts to supply it, be those attempts however imperfect or bluadering or unauthorized? And have I not often told you, that I should cease from such attempts, as soon as you, who are competent to it, shall enter upon the work of preaching politics?

Some of you will admit, that it might not be amiss for me to preach politics on any other day than the Sabbath. But, here, is a point, which I cannot, dare not yield. The Bible is full of politics, and its politics, as well as its other instructions, are entitled to be preached on the Sabbath. One part of the Bible is as holy as another. Every part of it is as holy, as the Sabbath: and it is, consequently, no desecration of the Sabbath to use it for publishing any of the truths of the Bible. Therefore, to yield the point, that it is proper to preach politics on the Sabbath, is what I cannot, so long as I remain a believer in the whole Bible, and in the equal sacredness of all its parts. To yield this point would be to fall in with the popular notion, that all politics are corrupt—that one kind is morally no better than another—and that, because it would be unseemly and revolting to teach the politics of the Democratic or Whig party on the Sabbath, no other kind of politics, not even the politics of the Bible, should be taught on that day.

But, after all, is there the most perfect sincerity in your demonstrations of horror at my preaching of politics? I never hear any of you complain, that the New England ministers preached politics on the Sabbath, in the Revolutionary war. Nevertheless, the politics, which they preached, were bloody politics; and the oppression, against which those politics were arrayed, was simply an unrighteous money tax. On the other hand, the politics, which the abolitionist preaches, are bloodless and peaceful—though the form of oppression, which they are intended to overthrow, is as cruel and horrible, as any, that ever aroused the revenge of the human heart. I ask again, whether you are perfectly sincere;—for I have never known you complain even of those New England ministers, who, on Sunday, as well as other days, went upon the very battle field to preach and pray their bloody politics. The only preaching of politics, of which I hear you complain, is that of which your Clay and Polk-voting hearers and supporters complain.

It will soon be two years, since I attempted, in the presence of a great audience, in the County of Onondaga, to vindicate the use, which I make of the Sabbath, in behalf of the enslaved and crushed millions of my countrymen. How far I succeeded, or how far the ministers of the gospel, who confronted me, succeeded, is left to others to judge. I now propose, that an opportunity be given to the people of the County of Madison to hear arguments for and against such use; and that, to this end, numerous meetings be held in the County.

I would, indeed, that you might all, ere the proposed meetings, be persuaded, that it is your duty to preach politics, and to preach them on the Sabbath as well as on other days. I would, indeed, that, instead of opposing me in those meetings, you might all take my side, or, rather, take my place in them, and inculcate on your fellow citizens the duty of casting their votes for deliverers, not oppressors, of the poor—for friends, not enemies of impartial and universal liberty. It is not, however, to be expected, that you will all have the integrity and courage and self-denial to perform that duty, which to perform requires far more of integrity, courage, and self-denial, than is required in the performance of any other of the duties of the ministers of the gospel in this nation. It costs but little to sneer at and denounce the preachers of politics; to call them tramplers on the Sabbath and Infidels. But, it will cost you a great deal to turn preachers of politics yourselves. Ere you can make up your minds to preach politics, and to tell your hearers not to vote for the robbers of the poor and the traffickers in human flesh; you must, of course, make up your minds to be persecuted—to be deprived of your salaries—and to be driven from your pulpits. Who of you could have retained his

place and means of subsistence, had he, last Autumn, been honest enough and courageous enough to say to his people: "Vote not for Clay—vote not for Polk. They are not fit for civil rulers, who live on the coerced and unrequited toil of their poor, lashed, and bleeding, and broken hearted, sisters and brothers. They are monsters of inhumanity, who sell brother from sister—parent from child—husband from wife."

The duty of the teacher of religion, as is manifest in the practice of both prophets and apostles, is to preach those truths to his people, which they are least willing to hear. Do they hate Temperance? Then is he, both "in season and out of season," to set the claims of Temperance before them. Is Adultery their besetting sin? Then is the Seventh Commandment, more than any other, to be pressed upon their consciences. But, do we not know, that the American people, in all the length and breadth of the land, are mad upon their political idols?—and that Churches and Congregations, which would bear the most pointed rebukes of their other sins, would gnash their teeth upon their pastors, should those pastors deal faithfully and plainly with them, in respect to these idols? Pastors of the proslavery Churches of the County of Madison!—are you happy in the thought, that yours are gentle tempered Churches? Let me tell you, that you have never most effectually tried their temper; and that you never will have done so, until you have arraigned their votes for Clay and Polk, or some other of their blood-red political crimes against God and man. When you have been thus bold and faithful, you will learn, that many professing christians, who sleep sweetly, whilst you "sew pillows to their arm-holes," wake up in wrath, as soon as you begin to tear away those "pillows." I wish the experiment could be made on some of the proslavery religionists of this County. I wish, that some of the proslavery ministers of this County could, for once, be so forgetful of the counsels of prudence, as to make the experiment.

I seldom hear a minister speak of his having dealt plainly and honestly with his people, that I am not, more or less, inclined to ask him: "But have you dared to preach politics to them?" By this most searching test of ministerial fidelity in this land have I, at once, desired to try him. John might have boasted, that, by his plain and faithful preaching, he brought Herod to do "many things." But, had he forborne to press upon Herod that one thing, the pressing of which cost him his head; he might, indeed, have saved his head, but he might, too, have lost his soul. So the minister of the gospel in this County who deals, be it ever so closely, with his people, in respect to every other of their sins;—if, nevertheless, he slides over that, which is the greatest sin of this Nation—the sin of choosing oppressors and the apologists of oppressors for rulers—entitles himself to the reward, not of a faithful, but of a traitorous, religious teacher.

Oh that every minister in this County would, the present Summer, preach, were it only one honest sermon on politics—a sermon, showing how widely the politics of God in the Bible differ from the politics of the Devil in our country—a sermon, showing what a crime against humanity and religion it is to cling to the Whig, or Democratic, or any other proslavery party, be it in Church or State. The County of Madison would thereby be influenced to take her stand, at the approaching Election, by the side of the slave:—other Counties would quickly follow her example:—and but little time would pass away, ere Liberty would be proclaimed "throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof."

That there may be no lack of time to diffuse the notice of the proposed meetings, and that they may not interfere with the urgent claims of the harvest field, it is thought proper to defer them until September. They will, with the Divine permission, be held as follows:

At Bailey's Corners, Brookfield,	Tuesday,	Sept 2	At Log City, - -	Tuesday,	Sept. 9
Hamilton Village,	Wednesday,	" 3	Madison Village, -	Wednesday,	" 10
Baptist Church, Lebanon,	Thursday,	" 4	Munnsville, - -	Thursday,	" 11
Slab City, Georgetown,	Friday,	" 5	Cazenovia, - -	Friday,	" 12
Erieville, - -	Saturday,	" 6	De Ruyter, - -	Saturday,	" 13

(The following day, viz. Sunday, 14th September, I expect to preach politics in Homer, Cortland Co. The morning exercises to begin at 1-2 past 10.)

At Baptist Church, Fenner,	Tuesday,	Sept. 16	At Canastota, - -	Thursday,	Sept. 18
Chittenango, -	Wednesday,	" 17	Peterboro, - -	Saturday,	" 20

All the meetings in Madison Co. to begin at 1 P. M.

At each of the meetings to be held in this County I shall be happy to meet in discussion such person, as my opponents may select for this purpose. It is immaterial to me, whether the question for discussion be: "Is it right to preach on the Sabbath such politics, as Gerrit Smith preaches on that day?" or: "Is it right to preach the politics of the Bible on the Sabbath?" I say, that I have no choice between these questions; and I say so, for the simple reason, that the politics, which I preach on the Sabbath, are identical with the politics of the Bible.

Respectfully yours,

GERRIT SMITH.

PETERBORO, July 15th, 1845.

P. S. It is proper to say, that should I, by reason of the bodily infirmities, which now confine me to my home, or from some other cause, be prevented from attending any of the proposed meetings, my place will be supplied by another and abler advocate of the duty of preaching politics.

GERRIT SMITH'S REPLY TO COLORED CITIZENS OF ALBANY.

PETERBORO, March 13, 1846.

Messrs. WILLIAM RICH, JAMES HENDERSON, FRANCIS LIPPINS, JOHN WENDALL, CHAS. S. MORTON, RICHARD THOMPSON, WILLIAM H. TOPP:

GENTLEMEN,—

Your letter is received. You are members of a State Central Committee, whose object is to restore the right of suffrage to the colored people of this State: and, so far as I am acquainted with you, you are ourselves of this description of people.

Your eloquent and affecting letter spreads out your views of my duty in respect to the Convention for revising the Constitution of this State. Passing over every thing else on its five pages, I proceed, at once, to examine its two leading positions.

The first of these is—that suffrage is "the point at issue"; and the second—that it is my duty to vote for men for seats in the Convention, "whether Whigs or Democrats, who will pledge themselves" to favor your claim to the right of suffrage.

But the first of these positions is as manifestly untrue, as would be the position, that the eligibility to civil office of ministers of the gospel is "the point at issue"; or, as would be the position, that the eligibility of landless men, or foreigners, to the office of Governor is "the point at issue." The question is not, how we shall get into the New Constitution this one good thing, or that one good thing, or the other one good thing. The true and unspeakably more important question is, how we shall obtain for the people of this State a Civil Government, such as it should be in its object, form, and spirit.

If by the second position, you mean, that I ought not to refuse to vote for a man, merely because he holds Whig or Democratic doctrines, I agree with you. But, if you mean by it, that I am at liberty to vote for men, who think slaveholders fit to administer Civil Government, then I disagree with you. I am not ignorant of the representation, that I would confine my vote, and would have others confine theirs, to members of the Liberty party. Such representation is, however, as false, as it is frequent and industrious. Its design is to convict me of narrow mindedness and of the spirit of a partisan; and, thus, to strip me of any influence, which I may have, in the choice of delegates to the Convention. From the first, my ground has been, that we are to choose the most suitable men for our candidates, be those men in or out of the Liberty party. My only concern has been, that the men we choose be suited to the work to which we call them:—and, now, to the question—who are the men, that are suited to it?

Were we called on to supply a community with one man to preach the gospel and another to lecture on temperance, we should choose persons adapted to these employments. We should not choose an infidel for the one and an unreformed drunkard for the other. But, we are not to have less reference to adaptation, in choosing men to construct a Civil Government. In choosing them, we are to feel ourselves shut up to the duty of choosing such, as have the head and the heart for this high and holy work. Whom then may we not choose? We may not choose slaveholders. For, whilst the chief talent of God in the gift of Civil Government is, obviously, to provide therein protection for the poor and ignorant and weak and oppressed, such dependent ones are the very ones, whom the slaveholder makes the victims of his avarice and lust and cruelty. They are the very ones, whose life-blood it is his business to tread out. Whom else may we not choose? We may not choose those, who think slaveholders fit to administer Civil Government;—for such must be well nigh as ignorant, as slaveholders themselves, of the true designs and legitimate duties of Civil Government. The man who can choose a slaveholder for the work of administering or constructing a Civil Government, does, in that very choice, prove himself unfit for the work.

Deriving my views of Civil Government from the Bible—views, "the preaching" of which on Sundays, as well as on other days, for the last few years, has rendered me even more odious than I was before,—you must excuse me, gentlemen, for declining to vote for those, who think slaveholders entitled either to mold or to administer Civil Government. Slaveholders being the greatest of all pirates, I must contend, that Civil Government owes them none of its honors;—owes them, in short, nothing but its severest punishments.

Civil Government being, in its existing perversions, the heaviest curse and most terrible enemy of the poor. I cannot consent to join you in any course, the tendency of which is to leave it essentially unimproved. On the contrary, my desires are deep, that you should unite your endeavors with my own to bring back Civil Government to its original and Heaven-impressed character. Oh how happy, were every Civil ruler able to say in the review of his official conduct, as Job said in review of his: "I was a father to the poor!" Oh how happy, could God say of every Civil ruler, as He said of one: "He judged the cause of the poor and needy!" Oh how happy, if every Civil Government should "hide the outcast and betray not him that wandereth," and make itself that merciful shelter to the oppressed, and that strong support to the weak and helpless, which God requires every Civil Government to be!

Do you ask me, whether proslavery voters—and by proslavery voters I especially mean those, who vote for slaveholders—cannot be depended on to make our New Constitution all I wish to see it—I answer, that they, who have not imbibed the Bible idea of Civil Government, and who think slaveholders suitable persons for Civil rulers, are as unfit to appreciate the true character and uses of Civil Government, as swine are to appreciate pearls; and are, therefore, totally unfit to frame political Constitutions. It is enough for me to know, in order to justify the withholding of my vote from proslavery voters, that the dignity of Civil Government should not be insulted, nor its purity sullied, by choosing them either to construct or to administer it.

But what right have I to feel confident, that proslavery voters will make the Constitution, in any respect, what I, as an antislavery man, would have it? What right have I to feel confident, that they will go even for universal suffrage? You do not yourselves believe, that they will, unless they pledge themselves, that they will:—and the very fact, that they cannot be trusted without a pledge, shows, that they cannot be trusted with it. You would not require a pledge from William Jay, or William Goodell, or Alvan Stewart. Their *antislavery* character makes it unnecessary—makes it, indeed, unthought of. Be assured, gentlemen, that if your candidates' *proslavery* character is such, that you must exact a pledge of them to go against that character—to go against themselves—you but tempt them to hypocrisy, and but expose yourselves to disappointment, when you exact their pledges. I would, that you were consistent on this point. You would trust no man with your key, of whom you required a pledge not to steal your money. Why, then, should you vote power into the hands of a man, whose pledge you need, that he will not use that power to rob you of one of your most important natural rights? I say *natural* rights—for I indignantly reject the idea, that voting is a mere franchise—a mere gift of Government. It is an inherent, as well as a most important right.

I wish not to be misunderstood. I do not deny, that they who shall, on this occasion, give you their pledges, will redeem them. I only deny, that you are at liberty to trust either them, or their pledges. They, who organized the Liberty Party, did so for the sole reason, that they found that the men, who cling to proslavery parties, cannot be trusted on any question affecting that of slavery. With the members of such parties right is not the rule of expediency, but expediency the rule of right:—and if considerations of expediency prompt them to give a pledge to-day, they may, nevertheless, to-morrow, yield to the stronger considerations of expediency, which shall demand its violation.

But, if I am not allowed to feel sure, that members of proslavery parties, though pledged to do so, will give you back the right of suffrage, of which you have been so wickedly and meanly robbed; how much less can I feel sure,

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that they will make the New Constitution treaty directly against slavery? And is there not the most urgent need that it should be so doing? The South is, now, busy in upholding slavery, as deeply as she can, in her Constitutional laws. She is, now, busy in propagating the doctrine, that the world over, the appropriation and the labor of slavery. She is, now, busy in extending the dominion of slavery. She has already seized a large part of Mexico; and, now, looks with glaring eyes on the remainder—on Cuba and Hayti also. Surely, then, this is the time, when the North should be as actively anti-slavery, as the South is actively proslavery. Surely, then, this is the time, when the North should speak out in her Constitutional laws as decisively and as loudly against slavery, as the South does in hers for it—and this she should do, if only to protest thereby against being longer bound, hand and foot, by the slave power. The present is, most emphatically, the time for the Constitution of this great State to say, that the slave, come he whence he may, is, with his first tread upon the soil of this State—with his first breathing of its air—a freeman. The present, most emphatically, is the time for the Constitution of this great State to declare, that none of the prisons of the State and no persons, who hold office under its Government, shall be at the service of the pursuers of slaves. The present too is, most emphatically, the time for the Constitution of this great State to provide for the effectual punishment of such pursuers; and also for the effectual punishment of such of its citizens, as shall be guilty of trafficking in human beings in any part of the world, or of taking property-liens on human beings, in any part of the world. Is it said, that the Federal Constitution stands in the way of the universal liberty, which I propose? Rightly interpreted, it does not. Rightly interpreted, it is, from beginning to end, an anti-slavery instrument. But, what if it be on the side of the oppressor? An authority paramount to its authority—the authority of Heaven itself—requires the Government of the State of New-York and every other Civil Government, to protect all the guiltless poor within their respective jurisdictions.

Do you say, that such Constitutional provisions in behalf of liberty and of human rights, as I have here suggested, have never yet had a place in the fundamental and organic law of any State or Nation? That they never have had, is the greater reason why they should have. There would be no surprise, were it proposed to have Constitutional provisions in behalf of property or education. Why should there be at propositions for Constitutional provisions against the demands and encroachments of slavery? Our present Constitution provides, that the Onondaga Salt Springs and the Erie and Champlain Canals shall never be sold, but shall always remain the property of the People of the State. It also provides, that the avails of the lands belonging to the said People, shall be added to the Common School Fund. Were our fellow citizens not more concerned respecting questions of property than questions of personal liberty—about money than about man—they would, beyond a doubt, esteem such Constitutional provisions, as I have suggested, to be pre-eminently suitable.

You will, gentlemen, readily admit, that members of proslavery parties cannot be relied on to incorporate the suggested provisions, nor, indeed, any other antislavery provisions, in the new Constitution. The National Whig and Democratic parties would be broken up, were their members in this State to take such a stand against slavery. But, if they cannot be relied on to take such a stand, would I not be a traitor to the slave, were I to vote for them?—and would not he also be a traitor to the slave, who should ask me to vote for them?

But you urge on me the importance of your obtainment of the right of suffrage. I admit its importance: and, then, turn to urge on you the infinitely greater importance of adhering to our principles. You are, gentlemen, my fellow abolitionists. Our business, as abolitionists, is to maintain and apply our abolition principles—and not to barter them away for universal suffrage, or for any other good. We are to rejoice in all the gain, that comes from adhering to our principles; and we are never to make the experiment of trying what profit there is in abandoning them.

You intimate, that I undervalue the importance of your possessing the right of suffrage. Possibly, I do undervalue it. However that may be, frankness requires me to admit, that my greater desire is not for universal suffrage, but for universal acquiescence in the true character and uses of Civil Government;—not that every man vote, but that every man cast his vote in the right spirit and for the right ends.

The right of suffrage, when exercised selfishly and tyrannically, is no blessing either to him, who exercises it, or to others. In five of the six New England States, all men possess this right; and they exercise it, in behalf of American slavery. It was not, when they were Monarchies, but when they were Republics, and the right of suffrage widely diffused among their citizens, that slaves were most numerous in Greece and Rome. Were there but a few voters in this Nation, the system of American slavery could not be maintained. The proslavery parties, which uphold the infernal system, could not uphold it, were not the great mass of American citizens in their ranks—were not the great mass of American citizens proslavery voters. It requires millions of tyrants to uphold that system: and the mistaken views of Civil Government, and the selfish expectations from their party connexions, make tyrants of our millions of voters who uphold it. Were half of these millions not voters, that half would be accessible to antislavery truth; and would soon be brought to swell to irresistibleness the influences against slavery. Should, however, those just views of Civil Government prevail, which every abolitionist is bound industriously to inculcate, the greater the number of voters, the better. For in that case the voter would have, along with the power, the disposition, to uphold the right and put down the wrong. The doctrine, therefore, of every abolitionist—of every friend of the right and the true—should be—
UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE AND JUST VIEWS OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

But you will, perhaps, say, that *colored* men can certainly be relied on to vote against slavery; and that so far, at least, the right of suffrage would be properly exercised by them. Pardon me for my belief, that colored men are no better and no wiser than white men. If to-day, the right of suffrage were restored to the colored men of this State, to-morrow would see them enrolled in proslavery parties, and ready, in the selfishness of their hearts, and in their ignorance of the character and duties of Civil Government, to vote for slavery—to vote for the buyers and sellers and whippers and plunderers of the Lord's poor. I venture the remark, that more than three-fourths of the colored men, who voted in this Nation, in the Fall of 1844, voted for those, who belong to the class, that traffic in colored people, whip colored women, and steal colored babies.

Be assured, gentlemen, that the great political evil of the world is not, that so few vote—but that they, who do vote, vote so ignorantly, so selfishly, so tyrannically. How painful to the heart of enlightened benevolence is an American Election!—a selfish strife about Banks and Tariffs and Treasuries, instead of a philanthropic endeavor to give liberty to the slave, and protection to the poor!—a perverting of Civil Government from its merciful work of caring for the needy and the oppressed, into an instrument of avarice and tyranny!

Would, that there were twenty thousand men in this State to lift up their voices, and to cast their ballots, in favor of restoring Civil Government to the true and Bible idea of Civil Government! How happy would be their influence on the Convention! The New Constitution would, in that case, testify against slavery, as the most stupendous fraud—as "the sum of all villanies." It would, in that case, restore to you the right of suffrage—for slavery, having robbed you of that right, the Constitution, which denounces slavery, will give you back that right. I fear, however, that there will not be twenty thousand, nor even ten thousand, men to stand up for a righteous, humane, and Heaven-featured, Civil Government. Certain it is, that none, who vote for proslavery men, can be reckoned among its advocates. God grant us such a Government! Slavery could not live under, or near, it: and it could no more refuse universal suffrage, than water can refuse to run down hill.

Whether, however, ours shall be a false or true Government, I would have universal suffrage enjoyed under it—for I would not have a man deprived of his right, however great the danger, that he may abuse it.

You advert to my connexion with the Liberty Party. There is, certainly, room to suspect, that one may be attached to the great and gloried-in Whig party, rather than to its principles—to the great and gloried-in Democratic party, rather than to its principles;—but I cannot admit, that there is aught in the history of my connexion with the Liberty party to justify the suspicion, that I am attached to it, rather than to its principles. I can look to that little and despised party for no gratification of my ambition—for no personal advantages whatever. It can commend itself to me only so far, as its principles commend it. That I must belong to it, is as much required by my moral man, as that I must breathe is by my physical. To doubt, when there are three political parties in the field—two of them in full fellowship with slavery, and the other the uncompromising hater of it—to doubt, I say, in these circumstances, which to belong to, is, with me, an impossibility. The idea, that, in my course on this Convention question, I am acting as a

member of the Liberty party rather than a man, I without found them. As a man, I must oppose the claim of such persons to create the Convention; and I do not see, that the annihilation of the Liberty party could, or should, to any degree, weaken this opposition.

But I must close. I have written you in great haste and under mental and bodily pain. I could not, however, slight, or appear to slight, your esteemed letter. I thank you for your kind allusion to my efforts in behalf of my colored brethren. I claim no merit for them. I am only sorry, that they have been so more faithful and well-deserving. I thank you also for admonishing me, that dishonor will attach to my name, should I, in voting for delegates to the Convention, go counter to your sense of propriety. But, I am so accustomed to suffer reproach, that I should hardly know myself, or be reconciled to myself, should I find myself commended. Besides, I, long ago, laid my account with being hated—hated by both white and colored men—for my course on this Convention question. Time and truth, however, will determine the character of that course. I patiently wait the result. For the present, they, who vote for the buyers and sellers of black men, will stand higher in the esteem of black men than they, who would sooner perish than so pervert the right of suffrage. But it may not be so always.

I do not say to you, that I sympathize with you under the deep wrongs, which the guiltiest of Nations heaps upon you. I leave it to your suddenly-sprung-up friends, whose lives show nothing of such sympathy, to make boast of it with their lips and pens. Nor do I seek to commend myself to you by framing an apology for you—ready, though I am, to admit, that the enormality of your desire to have abolitionists vote for pro-slavery men is diminished by the consideration, that you thereby hope to recover a most important right, and that you are deluded into the belief, that this, and this only, is the way to recover it. I prefer a more manly course—and rebuke you. It is meet, that they, who think you their inferiors, should show their contempt of you by flattering you. It belongs to such, as think you their equals, to show their respect for you by rebuking you.

You call on abolitionists to trample on their distinctive and deeply cherished principles, and to vote political power and influence into the hands of those, who vote for slaveholders, and uphold slavery. How dare you call on them thus to disgrace themselves?—thus to wrong the slave and to wrong you? And how can you consent to seek what is your due, at the expense of such self-degradation? Think you, that these Whigs and Democrats, who vote for slaveholders, would vote for them, if white men were the slaves of these slaveholders? You know, that they would not. They vote for them, because their slaves are but black men. And is it for black men then to ask us to vote for these Whigs and Democrats? Shame on the black men, who, for gain, however great, can thus join with the crucifiers of the poor black slave! Say you in reply, that, though you get the right of suffrage at the expense of the slave, you will use it for his deliverance? My frank, though perhaps offensive, rejoinder is, that there is but small room to hope for a very benevolent or beneficial exercise of a right, which has been so selfishly gotten. If, at the expense of the slave, you can join with his enemies, at his expense, you may also be willing to continue the union. But, however this may be, none will doubt, that to make slavery respectable is no way to overthrow it! And how can you more effectually contribute to make it respectable than by giving office, power, influence, and honor, to slaveholders or their allies? Would you have the practice of horse-stealing and sheep-stealing continued? Then get your fellow citizens to vote for horse-thieves and sheep-thieves, and for those who vote for them. And would you have the practice of man-stealing continued, then get your fellow citizens to vote for man-stealers, and for those who vote for them. But do not indulge the delusive hope, that American slavery will die a peaceful death, until we shall have come to hold it infamous to be a slaveholder, or to vote for a slaveholder, or to vote for him, who will vote for a slaveholder. Call you this an extravagant denunciation of the slaveholder and his allies? Such it would have been called in Liverpool and Bristol, when those Cities were growing up out of the profits of the slave-trade. Utter it there now, however—and every heart will respond to it. Here too will every heart respond to it, just as soon as we shall have dissolved our political, ecclesiastical, commercial, and social relations with slavery, and shall feel free to think and speak of the abomination as reason and religion require us to think and speak of it.

Would, gentlemen, that the following mottos, which antislavery Conventions, in different parts of the State, are cordially adopting, were engraven on every heart:

"No slaveholder for civil office; and no person, who thinks a slaveholder fit for it."

"No man for civil office, but a republican; and no slaveholder, and no person, who thinks a slaveholder fit for civil office, is a republican."

I am, very respectfully, your friend and brother,

GERRIT SMITH.

TO THE LIBERTY PARTY.

Some of the wisest and best of your number contend, that the Liberty Party was organized for other objects as well as for the overthrow of slavery.

It is generally admitted, that the Convention, held at Arcade in January 1840, was the Parent of the Liberty Party. Now, I cannot believe, that, among the candid and intelligent persons, who attended that Convention, there is one, who will say, that it intended to organize this Party for any other purpose than the overthrow of slavery. But, it is said, that Meetings, held a few months after the Arcade Convention—especially one in the City of New-York—committed the Liberty Party to various objects. I must, perhaps, admit, that they did so, if I admit their power to do so. But I do not admit, that they had this power. I have, always, regretted certain proceedings of the Meetings referred to. I would not intimate, that those proceedings misrepresented the sentiments of their authors. But, I believe no person will deny, that they had their origin in the purpose of conciliating my very democratic and much esteemed friend, Thomas Earle, and securing the acceptance of his nomination to the office of Vice President. Without those, or similar, proceedings, he would not accept it. With them, he did accept it.

Again—a far greater number of the wisest and best members of the Liberty Party admit, that it was organized for no other purpose than the overthrow of slavery; but contend, that the time has come for multiplying its objects, and radically changing its character. They would, it is true, have its antislavery-work its first work: but they lay out for it much other work. They would have it specifically committed to the abolition of restrictions on commerce; to the abolition of monopolies; to the reduction of salaries; and to many other objects. The question, whether it is wise to attempt such a change in the Liberty Party is a very grave one. My own opinion (and I would have every member of the Party avail himself of his equal right and equal duty to express his—) is, that the time has not yet come to attempt it.

The principal reasons assigned for this change are, 1st, That a political party should express definite views and commit itself to definite courses in relation to the various matters, which claim the attention of Civil Government.

2d, That, in this way only, can the Liberty Party hope to become a majority, or even to increase its numbers.

On the first reason I would remark, that I have a deepening impression,—that a political party should, in its organization, solemnly purpose to give its attention to all the legitimate objects and interests of Civil Government; and that I regret, that the Liberty Party did not do so. I add, that I should be glad to see it giving, forthwith, this extent to the scope of its regards. Nevertheless, for the Liberty Party to commit itself, now, to the numerous specific courses, which it is contended it should commit itself to, would, as I shall endeavor to show, be premature. It would be premature, even on the supposition, that these courses are right;—for it would be a movement in advance of its light and convictions. The Liberty Party, if not as extensively so as other political parties, is, nevertheless, very ignorant, in respect to the character and uses of Civil Government. Who of us can claim to be enlightened on this subject, on which darkness so universally prevails? Who of us does not need to go to school to first principles on this subject, ere the practical duties, resulting from them, can be made plain to him?

The chief excellence of the Liberty Party consists not in the fact, that the one thing, to which it is committed, viz: the overthrow of slavery, is a high and obvious duty. Even more meritorious than the object of its organization is the principle of action, by which it seeks to achieve that object. This principle of action is the equal rights of men. This principle of action is, that a man is a man. British abolitionists, in their struggle for the overthrow of British slavery, said, that a *man* ought not to be a *slave*:—but they were infinitely short of saying, that a man is a man, and that equal rights belong to all men. American abolitionists, however, contend, that slavery should be abolished, not because political economy, national prosperity, or any kindred considerations demand its abolition; but because it is demanded by the principle, that "all men are created equal," and that no man is to be excluded from the rights of manhood.

Our first duty, as Liberty men, is to study, with an earnest and obedient spirit, the antislavery claims of this admitted principle of Liberty party action. But the antislavery claims of this principle are not its only claims. Every political party, in all its measures—so, too, every Civil Government, in all its dealings with its subjects, whether white or black, and in all its dealings with foreigners, be they barbarous or civilized—is to be controlled by this principle of the equal rights of all men. No English Corn-laws are to encroach on the rights of Americans. No American Tariffs are to encroach on the rights of Englishmen.

It follows from what I have said, that every political party should inform itself of all the bearings of the great principle of action referred to, and stand ready to apply it in every direction, in which its application may be called for. Nothing short of this should the Liberty party propose to itself. But this Party is not yet sufficiently acquainted with

the wide scope of its own principle of action to justify it in arriving at confident conclusions on all the applications of that principle. It is not yet prepared to arrive at such conclusions. It is not yet prepared to drive down its stakes on the various financial and economical questions, which are to be considered and decided on, in the light of this principle.

As proof, that the Liberty party is not yet very conversant with this principle of equal regards for the equal rights of all men, I remark,

1st. That not a few of its members think it right to honor men with civil office, who believe traffickers in human flesh fit for it. The recent ruin (I hope not irretrievable) of the Liberty Party in this State is to be ascribed to this unhappy belief.

2d. That many of its members do not see it to be a violation of this principle—do not see it to be injustice to the slave—to continue in Church fellowship with those, who connive at his slavery, or even with those, who are guilty of directly holding him in slavery. As if they, who have Church fellowship with my oppressors, do not thereby most effectually indorse my oppression, and trample on my rights!

3d. That not one in fifty of the members of the Liberty Party see it to be unjust toward the slave to purchase the products of his unrequited and coerced toil, and, thereby, supply the most efficient motive for continuing him in slavery.

Now, the men, who casts a proslavery vote, or who clings to a proslavery Church, or who eats and wears stolen articles—and eats and wears them, because he can buy them cheaper than he can the like articles honestly produced—may, indeed, have very confident views concerning Banks and Tariffs and Monopolies. But, that these views spring from a clear and intelligent apprehension of the equal rights of all men is, to say the least, very questionable. How can one see distant objects, who is unable to see those, which lie at his feet? How can one discern the remoter and less certain demands of a principle, whilst blind to those obvious duties, which are its immediate and first called for duties?

Would not the Liberty Party, instead of prematurely committing itself on financial and economical questions, do better to take up a part of the time of its meetings and a part of the columns of its newspapers, in kind, sincere, earnest endeavors to learn, not what is taught by corrupt and benighted political parties on these questions, but what is taught on them by its own admitted principle of action—its principle, that a man is a man, and that the rights of any one man are as great and as sacred, as the rights of any other man? Let such men, as Birney, and Goodell, and Green, be left perfectly free to contend in antislavery meetings and antislavery newspapers, that this principle of equal rights demands free trade; and let the many wise and faithful members of the Liberty Party, who believe, that restrictions on trade are not only compatible with, but even protective of, the equal rights of men, have the like freedom and facility to express their views also. In this wise, two or three years would not only shed great light on the path of the Liberty Party, but would produce no extensive agreement among its members, on subjects, on which they are now opposed to each other, and opposed to each other chiefly, as is probable, for the lack of this light. I am helped to this conclusion not a little by the fact, that Liberty men have come to see alike on questions, which they have freely discussed. For instance, every Liberty man sees, that the great principle of Liberty Party action—the principle, that a man is a man—entitles blacks, as well as whites, to the right of suffrage. Every Liberty man sees also, that the patriotism, which would exclude foreigners from the ballot-box and from office, is a sentiment unworthy of every just and generous heart, and contrary to all the teachings of this great principle of Liberty Party action. Again, abolitionists are, as much more generally than anti-abolitionists, in favor of restoring to woman her natural right of suffrage, as they have, more generally than anti-abolitionists, discussed the duty of such restoration. As I have referred to the discussion of this duty, let me add, that the continuance of this discussion by abolitionists will soon make the conviction universal amongst them, that it is for heathen, not for christian, for barbarous, not for civilized, communities to stamp woman with inferiority, and to thrust her away from duties, to which she is as well adapted by her nature, as man is by his.

But, I hasten to consider the other reason for modifying the Liberty Party. This reason is, that it is only by means of the proposed modification, that the Liberty Party can intelligently hope to become a majority, or even to increase its present numbers.

Such modification could not—nothing can—drive a sound Liberty man into a proslavery party. But it might have the effect to drive some of its members out of the Liberty Party. Some of them, strenuously opposed to the views on financial and economical questions to which the Liberty Party had committed itself, would, because of such committal, quit it. I trust, however, that their number would be small. Proper, as such opposition might be, it would in most cases, I doubt not, be accompanied by enough of forbearance to prevent the quitting of a Party, which is the only antislavery political party.

I turn now to inquire, whence would be the accessions to the Liberty Party, consequent on such a modification of it? The answer is, that they would come from the Whig party, if the modification should be such, as to please Whigs; and from the Democratic party, should it be such, as to please Democrats. But to this we reply, that they, who shall be attracted to us by our positions on financial and economical questions, and who, but for this attraction, would remain in their proslavery party, will not be worth our having. They will be accessions of weakness and corruption, instead of strength and purity. We wish none to come to us, who do not feel themselves drawn toward our antislavery position.

I say nothing more on this head, than to express my belief, that the proposed changes, in the plan and object of the Liberty Party, would bring but few persons into it—even fewer than they would exclude from it; and to express my

further belief, that the Liberty Party would be better without than with those, who should, in this wise, be brought into it.

I would there were less impatience to multiply members of the Liberty Party. Were they but half as many as they are, they would, still, be sufficiently numerous, if only faithful to its principles, to crown it with victory. The Liberty Party is feeble, not because of its small numbers; but because it misrepresents, is unfaithful to, and stands in the way of the progress and power of, its own principles. If but "free course" be given them, these principles will themselves work out the victory. To give them "free course" however, they who profess them, must practice, and not abandon, them; must represent, and not belie them.

All I will add is, that, although I think, the time for modifying the Liberty Party, in the way proposed, has not yet come—and not yet come, because its members do not sufficiently understand the bearings and requirements of its admitted principle of action—the principle, that a man is a man—that "all men are created equal"—I, nevertheless, desire no controversy with them, who, believing, that the time for it has already come, contend, that such modification should take place immediately. I admit, that they, who urge such immediate modification, will, if, in their own practices, they make a consistent exhibition of the great Liberty Party principle of action, exert no little influence on their brethren. Five thousand Liberty men, declaring their solemn conviction, that the principle of equal rights requires a stern refusal to belong to a proslavery Church, or to vote for any man, who votes for traffickers in human flesh; a stern refusal to continue to strip woman of her political rights, or to encourage the keeping of men in slavery by the consumption of the products of slave-labor—I say, that five thousand such men might, by the force of such a recommendation of this principle, and by the force of such consistency, take any position whatever within the range of that principle, and yet be, probably, able to draw to it the other sixty-five thousand Liberty men. Indeed, five thousand such men would be so valued for their fidelity to principle, and so trusted for the clearness of their vision, that, take almost what positions they might on questions of finance and economy, it would not be strange, if the great mass of Liberty men should soon take them.

But how vain it would be for Liberty men, who are themselves blind to the direct and immediate teachings of the great principle of equal rights, to attempt to instruct other Liberty men in the indirect and remote teachings of this principle! For instance, what a farce, and how fruitless of good, for several hundred Liberty men to come together at Port Byron, or elsewhere, with stolen clothes upon their backs and stolen food in their stomachs (for such are all slave-labor-products,) and, to turn up the white of their eyes, and put on sanctimonious looks, and shudder and scowl at the violence done to sound morality by Banks and Tariffs and high salaries!

GERRIT SMITH.

PETERBORO, May 7, 1846.

TO THE LIBERTY PARTY OF THE COUNTY OF MADISON:

PETERBORO, September 15, 1846.

From the bottom of my heart do I congratulate you. The New-York State Liberty Car is again upon the track. I trust, that it will not, hereafter, run off from it. Certain I am, that, whatever else may befal it, it will never, no never, more, run off again into that slough, which is worse than Bunyan's "Slough of Despond," or, indeed, any other slough. I, of course, refer to *the voting for proslavery men-slough.* As often hereafter, as it shall approach that deep and dirty mire-hole, even though it be fifty years hence, all hands will be on the look-out to guard it from the recurrence of its late appalling and never to be forgotten disaster.

All praise to the Canastota Convention for having lifted up our good old Car, and for having cleaned and repaired it, and set it in motion again. So muddy, and so shattered was it, I did not know, that I should ever ride in it again. But to ride in it now is far more pleasant than to ride in it, when it was new. The bruised and battered gun, which has been through the wars, is dearer to the soldier, than when it came shining from the shop:—and all the dearer is it, if it be one, that had fallen into the hands of the enemy, and was recaptured. So too, the Liberty Car is all the more precious for having been rescued from the designs of the Whigs—all the more precious for what it has suffered from the attempts of this most deceitful and, therefore, most dangerous, class of our enemies. "If possible, they shall deceive the very elect." There is no more danger, that our sham Democrats will be mistaken for friends of our cause, than that naked wolves will pass for sheep.

To drop my figure—the proceedings of the late State Convention at Canastota were such—were so characterized with truth and wisdom—that the Liberty Party of this State will, doubtless, proceed, henceforth, harmoniously and effectively. I understand, that it took the position, unanimously and heartily, against voting, in any conceivable circumstances whatever, for members of proslavery parties. Hereafter the Liberty Party of this State will not vote for a proslavery man, though it be for the humble office of pathmaster;—no, not even, if it be to gain an antislavery President by it. I understand too, that the course of the Convention on this subject had the entire concurrence of Alvan Stewart, Ace Raymond, Charles A. Wheaton, Wesley Bailey, O. A. Bowe, and others, who, as well as these, had, in their eagerness to secure the right of suffrage to our colored brethren, been willing to choose men to construct fundamental civil laws, who think buyers and sellers of human flesh fit both to administer and construct civil laws. Honor to these friends, who, even in their error, showed how quick was their benevolence and how absorbing was their sympathy; and who, in turning publicly away from that error, have set so beautiful an example of magnanimity! Wise and good men are not ashamed to change. Never had I thought half so favorably of Robert Peel and John P. Hale, as I did, when I came to those parts of their late speeches, where they are not ashamed to avow themselves the subjects of change. It is little and mean men, who boast of their consistency, and that they never change; and who think, that they say the very hardest and most disparaging thing of an opponent, when they accuse him of change.

If report may be relied on, the Canastota Convention did good service on another point also. It did not commit the Liberty Party to free trade. But, it did just what it should do in conceding to men of whatever views of political economy the right to inculcate those views in Liberty Party Meetings and Liberty Party Papers. The Liberty Party is not yet prepared to say what is truth in respect to the various subjects claiming the attention of Government. But, because the great political parties of the country are well nigh past all hope of espousing the antislavery principle, or any other principle of righteousness, the Liberty Party is bound to look upon itself as destined, in all probability, to be a permanent, and even an actually National, Party. If such, however, is the probability, and if the reins of Government may yet come into its hands, how can it, without very guilty delinquency, refrain from enlightening itself, in respect to the various duties of Government—in respect to the various bearings and applications of that principle of equal justice to all men, which is its own acknowledged fundamental principle? It need not be feared, that its antislavery character will, ere the overthrow of slavery, cease to be its reigning character; or that, ere that event, questions of political economy will be very extensively discussed by it, save as they stand related to slavery.

The Canastota Convention is entitled to our thanks for its nominations also. I have been personally acquainted with Mr. Bradley, for many years. I do not know his sentiments on the various questions of economy and finance, which come under our consideration. But I know him to have been, from the beginning of the antislavery movement, its steadfast and devoted friend. This of itself, and did I know nothing else of him, would go far to inspire me with confidence in his honesty. It takes an honest man to remain true to a cause, from which there are so numerous and so powerful temptations to swerve. I know Mr. Bradley to be highly intelligent also.

Mr. Bradley's integrity, including, as does all real integrity, a candid and teachable spirit—his integrity, I say, united with his intelligence, makes it quite safe in my esteem, he his present views on questions of economy and finance what they may, to entrust him with the power of civil office. I should rejoice to see Henry Bradley, wise and upright as he is, and distinguished for his enlightened zeal in the cause of temperance, antislavery, and religion, occupying the chair of State.

Mr. Chaplin is a statesman. I know no man, who has larger or juster views of the true character and uses of Civil Government. Happy the State, which has men like William L. Chaplin for its rulers!

John Thomas and James Sperry are our candidates for Canal Commissioners. The former lives near us; and many of you know him. Where shall we look for a more brilliant and efficient friend of the slave? Mr. Sperry, whom but few of you know, it has, for a number of years, been my privilege to know. He is just such a plain, wise, honest, farmer, as I should be glad to see put into the office of Canal Commissioner, or into a much higher office.

I have, also, learned who were put in nomination, last Saturday, by our Madison County Liberty Convention. My whole heart responds to the nomination. I am personally acquainted with all the candidates. Mr. Downer and Dr. Saunders would, if elected to the Legislature, do honor to our County. Mr. Palmer has once been Sheriff of this County: and I should be happy to see his true philanthropy, exemplary life, and excellent habits of business, again adorn the office. Mr. Raymond and I have been mutual friends from our childhood: and were I to venture upon his praise, I might run into excess. I cannot, however, refrain from saying, that he is a gentleman of very superior intelligence; and that, in his circle of friends, his honesty and firmness are proverbial. Nor can I refrain from saying, that there is no man in this County, who has carried more head and heart into the antislavery cause than has Mr. Raymond. My gratitude and love are deeply stirred, when I think of his services. Day and night, in sunshine and storm, has he toiled for its success;—and, this too, notwithstanding he is a poor, very poor, man, who is obliged to labor most diligently, and economize most rigidly, for the support of a family very dear to his tender heart. Would it not be greatly to the praise of the voters of Madison to make such a man—a man, withal, peculiarly well qualified by his penmanship and otherwise—Clerk of their County? Can poor men—can good men—can any men—withhold their votes from him?

I have, thus, my friends, adverted to the wise proceedings of the Canastota Convention, and also to the good nominations made by our County Convention. In view of all these, should we not take courage, and act with unwonted zeal, union, and power? Was there ever so loud a call upon us for such action? Scores of thousands of slaves are still added, yearly, to our millions of slaves! Our army, for the purpose of getting more territory to drench with the tears, and sweat, and blood, of the African race, has gone forth to slaughter a poor, weak, and unoffending people! Our great political parties join hands in this murder; and are emulous to excel each other in acts of devotion to the slave-power! Our great National ecclesiastical bodies, which, impudently and blasphemously, call themselves Churches of Jesus Christ, are in full fellowship with these political parties! I add no more. Our motives to act are of illimitable power. The cries of chained millions and the voice of their avenging God are in our ears. We will act. We will, again, go to our neighbors, and again beg them, for the slaves' sake, for their own souls' sake, for the sake of their country, and for the sake of God, to break away from their blood-stained parties, and to unite with the few, who are praying and toiling for the deliverance of the oppressed.

I would that, as formerly, I could go through my neighborhood and through my County with messages of truth and mercy in behalf of my enslaved brethren. But, my bodily infirmities will, I fear, prevent it. Are there not, however, enough men and women of a merciful and self-sacrificing spirit to go into all the School Districts of our County, and, once more, beseech every voter, by all the unutterable woes of the oppressed millions of the South, to consecrate his vote to their deliverance?

Very respectfully, your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

PETERBORO, October 10, 1846.

To the Voters of the State of New York:

I have, this moment, finished the reading of the New Constitution. I may be charged with immodesty for lifting up my voice to hundreds of thousands of my fellow men. But the feelings of shame, sorrow, indignation, alarm, which fill me, will not stop, and need not stop, to consider the claims of modesty. A woman, however delicate and shrinking, might, were her child in danger of being kidnapped, rush into the street, and cry so loud for help, that all her neighbors could hear her—and she, nevertheless, remain uncensured, even by those, who are most observant of the proprieties of life. Thus, do extraordinary circumstances justify not only, but highly commend, the act, that would, otherwise, be exceedingly offensive. It is in such circumstances, that I have now taken up my pen:—and may not this gain me a pardon for beginning my Circular with so wide an address? May not this shelter me from the charge of immodesty and egotism for presuming to speak to so great numbers?

A deep and cruel wrong has been devised against the fifty thousand colored people of this State. It is meet to call upon you all to help them—for you are all able to come to their help. It is meet to call upon you all to help them—for they, who have devised this deep and cruel wrong, call upon you all to sanction their device and carry it into execution.

You are called on to adopt a Constitution, which contains the provisions,

First, That a man, for having a colored skin, shall be unrepresented in the Legislature. In other words, that, for this cause, he shall not be counted in the apportionment of members of the Legislature.

Second, That a man, for having a colored skin, shall be denied his right to cast a vote.

To be guilty, under a representative, and, withal, a republican, Government, of shutting out a part of the people from a representation in the Government, is to be guilty of a partiality for which there is, certainly, no excuse. It is to be guilty of a wrong, as palpable, as would be their exclusion from the common air and common water. It is, simply, a triumph of the strong over the weak—of the many over the few. The triumph, in the present instance, is over persons born upon our soil, and of parents, many of whom shed their blood in its defence. And as if to make the triumph most insulting and withering, the New Constitution prefers the white pauper, who subsists on the public charity, to the colored man, who earns his own bread. The Old Constitution, in the apportionment of members of the Legislature, excludes the pauper, as well as the colored man. The New Constitution leaves the colored man in the disgrace of such exclusion; and greatly deepens that disgrace by lifting up the pauper out of it.

The right to vote is not less sacred, and it is more valuable than the other right, of which the New Constitution robs the colored man. The right to vote is indispensably protective of all the other rights of him, who wields it. Emphatically true is this in the case of him, whose humble condition exposes him to aggressions. Hence, when Pennsylvania stripped her colored people of the right to vote, it made, as the sequel proved, all the other rights of that afflicted people an open and easy prey. But, that they were without the respectability and influence of voters, the colored people of the City of New-York had not been mobbed in 1834:—and that white persons were mobbed along with them, was, because such persons had magnanimously identified themselves with a people, whom our laws and usages degrade.

As in the case of their being denied political representation, so in this of their being denied a vote, the colored people suffer a wrong and a loss far less tolerable than they would from the plunder of their property. They might be plundered of their property, and yet be respected by others, and their self-respect also not invaded. But the denial of the right in question degrades them, both in their own esteem and the esteem of others: and, doing this, it contributes to multiply obstacles in the way of their subsistence, respectability, usefulness and happiness, so great and so numerous, as to compel a dehasement of character, from which it is well nigh miraculous, that so large a share of them escape. God be praised, that they do escape! The few of us, who have made ourselves acquainted with the colored people of this State, and have cast in our lot with them, can testify, that it is truly a large share of them, who escape the debasement of character, which their adverse and wretched circumstances force upon them. Would, that the white people of this State could throw down their prejudices against these colored brethren, and look candidly and patiently at their history! They would never take up those insane and murderous prejudices again. Repentance would break their hearts; and they would, thenceforth, love and admire those, whom they had previously hated and despised. No where have there been more triumphant struggles against the assaults of vice upon virtue; against the onset of despair upon hope; and against mean, malignant, mighty, oppressions, than those, of which great numbers of colored men and colored women in this State have shown themselves capable. In the midst of those temptations to low vice and utter abandonment, which, in such mighty hosts, assail extreme poverty; in the midst of discouragements the most appalling; in the midst of such persecutions, as strike their iron deepest into the soul; their indomitable courage and unbending integrity have, under the Divine blessing, still borne them along, and brought them off conquerors.

The political disabilities in question are to be deprecated, not for the sake only, or even mainly, of the colored people of this State. The three millions of American slaves will suffer from them. Their chains will be made tighter by them. As sinks the colored freeman, so sinks the colored slave: and as rises the one, so rises the other. To be able to say, that the colored people of the North are ignorant, abject, wretched, is to have the most plausible argument for his oppression that the Southern slaveholder has ever coveted: and never are Northern men more effectually doing the slaveholder's wicked work, than when engaged in disfranchising their colored brother, and multiplying impediments in the way of his obtaining science, property, respectability, and happiness. Let, however, the colored man of the North but have the rights of the white man of the North; and let the way be as open to the one, as to the other, to acquire wealth, and character, and power; and the Southern oppressor, instead of continuing to look Northward for justifications of his guilty relation, will find influences pouring in upon it, from that quarter, which will quickly dissolve it. The colored man of the South, when the capabilities of his race shall have been proved by the colored man of the North, will present himself in a new light to his master. Despised and hated before, he will then have become an object of respect and affection. The master will no more task, and lash, and chain, his victim. Of all such work his hand will then be weary. It will be palsied by the truth, which has flashed upon him, that he, whom, ere this, he had mistaken for a brute, is, in reality, a man—his fellow man—and his equal.

I have intimated the strong tendency of these political disabilities to degrade the subjects of them into the subjects of ignorance, vice, and crime. Their tendency is also to destroy in the subjects of them, all attachment to the Commonwealth, which inflicts so cruel and unprovoked a wrong. Our State cannot afford to inflict this wrong;—for it cannot afford its consequences. The public morals cannot afford, that so considerable an element in our population should be stamped with an almost necessarily characteristic debasement. Our political safety cannot afford, that scores of thousands, who, else, would equal the most patriotic of their fellow-citizens in devotion to the public good, and in capacity to promote it, should be converted into a fruitful source of disaffection and danger.

That in the year 1846, and after fifteen years of earnest, faithful, investigation of the wrongs, and manly, and eloquent, assertion of the claims of colored Americans, a Convention to prepare a Constitution for the State of New-York should propose those outrages on their political rights, is, indeed, amazing. One would have thought, that the sorrows, in which this unhappy people had, for centuries, been steeped, were enough to satiate the malice of the most fiendlike heart. One would have thought, that, by this time, hatred toward these poor outcasts had begun to exhaust itself, and pity begun to take its place. So far from this, however, the year 1846 surpasses every former year in conspicuous and flagitious measures of the white Americans against the colored Americans. The first of these measures is our war. Mexico had not wronged us. But, to perpetuate the slavery of colored Americans, we must have more territory to soak with their sweat, and tears, and blood: and, hence, have our armies gone forth to dismember that Nation. The annals of the world are searched in vain for a war, prompted by motives so base and diabolical. It is, withal, a war of eminent cowardice on the part of our country—a war, not only as unrighteous, as Mexico is unoffending, but as cowardly, as she is weak and distracted. Again, the most influential religious Association in the land, to avoid giving an occasion for pressing it, in the name of consistency, to question the piety of slaveholders and their fitness for Church membership, has, within a few weeks, actually refused to say, that it is wrong to vote notorious adulterers into the Church of Jesus Christ. Again, scarcely had we heard of this virtual and authoritative indorsement of American slavery, ere news of another, and still more authoritative and influential indorsement of it came from the other side of the Atlantic. The late World's Convention in London threw wide open to the buyers and sellers of human flesh a door of admission into the World's "Evangelical Alliance." The declaration of those American gentlemen in the Convention, who are in Church fellowship with slaveholders, that slavery is the creature of law, and their pretty broad hint, that, if they were required to give up their proslavery, the European delegates should be required to give up their rum-drinking;—these, together with the sympathy, which the Convention very naturally felt for men, who would rather pray than eat; prevailed to open that door. Slavery the creature of law—and, hence, the slaveholder is innocent! Lotteries the creature of law—and, hence, the dealer in lottery-tickets is innocent! Rumselling the creature of law—and, hence, the rumseller and rum-drinker are innocent!

I have glanced at a few of the recent crimes against colored Americans. The Convention for revising your Constitution would have you add another crime to this cluster of crimes. In apportioning members of the Legislature, and in prescribing the qualifications of voters, it asks you to pass over the poor black man, as no man. What will be your answer? God grant, that it may be, that "A MAN IS A MAN." God grant, that your answer may be an indignant rejection of the man-trampling and God-despising paper, which you are asked to adopt. That it is God-despising, as well as man-trampling, is as evident as that to His great and loving heart all branches of the human family are equally dear. "God is no respecter of persons"—and who, that truly loves him, is? Alas, what counterfeits of the religion of Heaven are current among men!

I am aware, that some of you, for the purpose of getting your votes for the adoption of this wicked paper, will be referred to the separate proposition in behalf of colored men, which the Convention has submitted. But this proposition is an *Amendment* to the New Constitution, rather than *a part* of it. It is a good Amendment: and every man, who does not suffer prejudice to tyrannize over his understanding, and the spirit of caste to shrivel his soul, will eagerly vote for it. But, however good may be the proposed Amendment of a Constitution, and however likely to prevail, it does not follow, that we may, therefore, approve of the Constitution itself, ere the Amendment has prevailed. It is, surely, time enough to approve of a thing, and to vote for it, after it is made right. We are not at liberty, because it may possibly, or even so probably, be made right, to indorse it, whilst it is yet wrong. But the Amendment in question was proposed without the least expectation on the part of any one, that it would prevail; and, as to the great majority of the Convention, it was proposed, without the least desire, that it should prevail. Some members of the Convention, and, among them, the respectable gentlemen from my own County, sincerely and warmly desired, that it should prevail. But, the dastardly and malicious provision in the body of the Constitution for disfranchising the colored man, whilst it exerts the mightiest of all the influences for the defeat of the Amendment, indicates also, most unequivocally, the desire of the great majority of the Convention for its defeat.

What, if, after all, this Amendment, put forth so coldly and hypocritically, should prevail! God has done even more improbable things than this for the cause of his poor, and His own glory.

We could not vote for the New Constitution, even were it right on the point of voting. Its crime against our colored brother, in excluding him from political representation, is, of itself, sufficiently great to disentitle it to the votes of all persons, who believing, that a man is a man, believe that, in the apportionment of members of the Legislature, the colored man should count, as well as the white man.

To get votes for the New Constitution, it will also be said, that, unless it be adopted, we shall have to live another quarter of a century, under the Old one. Why, however, should we need to live three years longer, under it? Having rejected the New Constitution, why need we lose a moment in taking steps for another Convention, that shall present to us another Constitution? Whether, indeed, it be rejected or adopted, why need we lose a moment to this end?

One thing we may reasonably hope for. It is, that, if we have another Convention to frame a Constitution, it will, to a great extent, be composed of men, who perceive and appreciate the true intent and uses of Civil Government; of men, who believe, that the chief design of God, in His merciful gift of Civil Government, is to provide protection therein for the poor, and ignorant, and weak, and helpless; of men, who believe, that the Civil Government, which plunders, instead of protecting, such, is unworthy the name;—is, indeed, not a Civil Government, but the meanest and most detestable of pirates. A Convention, composed of persons of this description, would present us with a Constitution, meriting the name of the poor man's Constitution. For it would be a Constitution, that would not only secure to the poorest of the poor, (what, because they are such they need more than others) the indispensably protective right of voting; but it would be a Constitution, that would secure to every man his home. That, in every Nation and every State with but one exception, the poor man's home is at the mercy of his creditors, is, surely, no indication of a progressive civilization or a progressive christianity. Every man's house should, emphatically, be his "castle": and the laws should permit no creditors to be strong enough to drag him from it. There should be one roof in the wide world, beneath which the poorest man should, for the consolation of his anxious heart, be allowed to feel, that he and his wife and their little ones, may lie down unmolested. There should be one spot—one speck—of this good earth, which our merciful Father in Heaven has given to us all, that the poorest man should be allowed to feel is his own.

I trust, that our next Constitution (and may it be speedily obtained!) will exempt every homestead from the grasp of creditors—be that homestead a dwelling in the City, or a dwelling and garden in the village, or a farm in the Country. Where the farm exceeds some twenty-five or thirty acres, let the excess be at the disposal of creditors.

I know not, that I was ever more pleased at the passage of a Resolution, than I was, last Thursday, when the Liberty Party Convention of the County of Madison passed the following Resolution:

"Resolved, That Liberty men should never cease, no, not for a day, to strive for a new Constitution for the State of New York, so long as his existing Constitution fails to recognize the right of a man to his vote, whatever may be the color of his skin, or the right of a man to his honestly obtained home, whatever the debts he may owe."

It will be objected to this Constitutional protection of the homestead, that some men, to escape paying their debts, will convert all their property into a splendid and costly dwelling-house. But, surely, laws can be framed to prevent the success of this, as well as another, fraud. Again, it will be objected, that some men, who have no other property to satisfy their debts, will continue to live in houses, which, though obtained with no fraudulent views, are, nevertheless, many times more expensive than comports with their narrow circumstances. Such cases would, doubtless, occur; but they would be rare. The general operation of the proposed provision would be to exempt from alienation, against the will of the owner, the humblest class of dwellings. The owner of a magnificent and costly house, who had come to be possessed of no other property, would, in the vast majority of such cases, get a cheaper house, to the end, that the difference in the cost of the two might furnish his family the means of subsistence. I repeat it, that the provision in question would be a provision, not in behalf of a splendid and luxurious living, but in behalf of a lowly and frugal condition. The Constitution, containing it, would be, what in this respect the Constitution of every State should be.

That the Constitution, now presented to you, is any thing else than the poor man's Constitution, should not surprise you. The Convention, which framed it, is said to be distinguished for only one thing—and that is, the vast aggregate wealth of its members. Now, that a Convention of rich men should frame a Constitution of peculiar adaptation to the necessities of the poor, is as unnatural, as that water should run uphill. The rich are the oppressors of the poor. The divinely inspired question: "Do not rich men oppress you?", although addressed to the poor, eighteen hundred years ago, is as pertinent now, as it was then. Combine with the opulence of a large share of the members of the Convention, the more significant fact, that, with but very few exceptions, they all think men, who chain, and lash, and buy, and sell, the poor, are fit for civil rulers; and you will wonder—not, that the Constitution, which they present to us, is no better—but, that it is no worse. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles"?

Strike, now, my fellow citizens—strike now—for another Convention and another Constitution:—and, though you shall have to agitate, and agitate, every year of your lives, for another Convention and another Constitution, be never content, until you have obtained a Constitution, which robs no poor man of his vote, and which secures to every poor man his home.

Would, that I were permitted to close this Circular with a stronger hope, that you will do what my whole heart has just called out to you to do. But, my hope is faint. When your party leaders and party presses were influencing us in the choice of Delegates to the Convention, a large share of them sought to make us believe, that for nothing did they desire a New Constitution so much, as to elevate by it the colored men of this State, and by means of his elevation, to help his enslaved race at the South. We were suspicious of them, then. We are more suspicious of them, now. We had, repeatedly, seen their anti-slavery professions followed by proslavery voting—even by voting for traffickers in human flesh. And, now, we not only see this heinous crime unrepeated of, but added to by their tame and quiet acquiescence in the outrage of the New Constitution on Colored Americans;—by, I might, perhaps truly, say, their heartfelt approval of that outrage.

Voters of the State of New-York! be on your guard against these party leaders and party editors. They will ask you to vote for the New Constitution; and some of them will put on an abolislavery face, when they ask the favor. Ask them, in turn, if they are ready for a practical adoption of such mottos, as these:—

"No slaveholder for civil office; and no person, who thinks a slaveholder fit for it:"

"No man for civil office, but a republican: and no slaveholder is a republican, and no person, who thinks a slaveholder fit for civil office, is a republican."

If they are not ready for it, then consent to be counselled by the Calhouns and McDuffies, who vote, as they talk, rather than by those, who go for the slave with their lips and their pens, and stab him to the heart with their votes.

Your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

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PETERBORO, August 23, 1847.

To the Editors of the Emancipator, Boston:

MY DEAR SIRS,—

The last No. of your Paper is before me. It contains an extract from a letter, which I wrote, four years ago: and praises, very highly, the argument in that extract. But, however proper that argument may have been, as applied to the Liberty party, four years ago, is it proper, as applied to it now?—and are you serving the cause of truth, in applying it to it now? "Come—let us reason together."

The only material positions, which I take in your extract from my letter, are

1st. The Liberty party should confine its efforts to the abolition of slavery.

2d. The Liberty party, if in power, will do its duty on all other subjects as well as on that of slavery.

The Liberty party, like the Antimasonic party, was, at the time of its organization, regarded as a temporary party. It is absurd to say, that a party, organized to promote a single specific reform, is to be regarded, as a permanent party. William Goodell and others, who contend, that the Liberty party was organized to look after all the political interests of the country, are consistent in having regarded it, from the first, as a permanent party.

As I view it, the Liberty party is, in the main, made up of persons, who have agreed to stand out of their old parties, and to stand together in the new one, until, and only until, those old parties shall consent to go for the abolition of slavery. Now, if the expectation, that those old parties will consent to go for the abolition of slavery, may still be indulged: and if, therefore, the Liberty party have, now, the same conditional existence, which was generally ascribed to it, at the time of its organization, and also at the time when I wrote the letter under consideration; then, I admit, that it would be inconsistent to attempt, at the present time, to connect with its object of abolishing slavery any other object whatever. A member of the Antimasonic party would, in proposing to extend the regards of his party to any thing else than the overthrow of secret societies, have subjected himself, for his inconsistency, to a rebuke no less merited than severe. And equally obnoxious to censure would be the proposition to tack another to the one original object of the Liberty party, while that party is regarded as but a temporary party. But, until within a few months, I had supposed, that the great majority of the Liberty party had, for the last two or three years, come to regard the great political parties of our country, as utterly incorrigible and hopeless; and the Liberty party as, therefore, necessarily a permanent party. During the last year or two, I have, very frequently, both with my lips and my pen, called on the Liberty party to espouse, along with the anti-slavery reform, the other reforms of free trade, anti-land-monopoly, &c. I felt free to do so, on the ground, that the Liberty party had ceased to be a temporary party, and was, therefore, under obligation to attend to all the political interests of the country.

I pass to the other position, taken by me in your extract from my letter. Although, I believed, that the Liberty party would drive the great political parties, or, at least, very large sections of them, to an antislavery attitude; I, probably, did not believe, when writing that letter, that it would itself ever get into power. I, probably, have never believed, that a political party based on opposition to a single form of evil, could ever get into power. After these preliminary remarks, I proceed to mention a couple of reasons, why my declaration, four years ago, that the Liberty party, if in power, would prove itself trust-worthy on all other questions, as well as on that of slavery, should not be quoted now, either *for* that party, or *against* my consistency. Read the letter, in which that declaration is made: and, you will see, that the declaration is made on the assumption, that the Liberty party was, on the question of slavery, a true party;—an assumption, which subsequent events have most painfully, and yet most abundantly, disproved. A large share of its editors and members have, on one occasion and another, shown themselves to be untrue on the question of slavery. They have been willing, "in peculiar circumstances," and "for this once," to cast preslavery votes—to vote for those, who vote for traffickers in human flesh. They have, thus, been willing to tear up the very foundation of the Liberty party, and repeal the very law of its existence. It is not, because I do not love the Liberty party [—let those, who claim, that they love it more than I do, give more proofs than I have done of loving it; and let them, especially, remember, that my promptness to censure it for its faults, and thereby increase its dislike of me, is no little proof of my love of it—] I say, that it is not, because I do not love the Liberty party, that I now give it, as my deliberate opinion, that, under the excuse of "peculiar circumstances," and of "this once," more than half of the editors and members of the Liberty party would, this day, vote for preslavery voters. Why, even our highly valued brother, who edits the Charter Oak, would, if I understand him, vote for a preslavery voter, who is in favor of a Tariff, rather than for an antislavery votar, who is opposed to a Tariff: and would, too, if I understand him, refuse to aid the antislavery cause, at the expense of the system of commercial restrictions.

I have, now, in my reference to its astonishing and sad revelations of unsoundness on the question of slavery, given one of my premised reasons, why my confidence in the Liberty party, previous to those revelations, should not be taken for my confidence in it now; and why this change in myself should not be suffered to argue against my consistency. I proceed to the other reason.

From the time of its organization, the professed principle of action of the Liberty party has been the equal rights of all men—equal justice to all men. The belief, that this was really its principle of action, was calculated, even more than the opposition to slavery, by which it illustrated that principle, to inspire confidence, that the Liberty party, if in power, would do its duty on all other questions, as well as on that of slavery. But that belief no longer exists: and the confidence, which it inspired, has, of course, died along with it. The long professed principle of action of the Liberty party is, its editors being witnesses, not its real principle of action. The Liberty party virtually repudiates this principle of action. Being now bound to take the ground of a permanent party, and to come under the obligations of every such party to look after the political interests of all classes, the Liberty party, if its editors are authorized to speak for it, is to be held guilty of repudiating this principle of action, inasmuch as these editors refuse to apply it in the direction of more than one single object. I would add, that, with such infidelity to the other objects, which, now, that it has the character of a permanent party, come legitimately before it, the Liberty party is not to be relied on for faithfulness even to its one original object.

You have, now, before you both of my premised reasons, why you are not at liberty to use, either to my disadvantage, or to the advantage of the Liberty party, what I said, four years ago, of its trustworthiness on other subjects, as well as on that of slavery.

I am not unmindful, that many Liberty party men, who are opposed to our acting on these other subjects, say, that we may *discuss* them. A year ago, I was quieted, and so were William Goodell and others, by the understanding, that, thenceforth, the Liberty party would allow and encourage, in its meetings and newspapers, the discussion of all those questions, which fall properly under the notice of a permanent political party. But, that we either deceived ourselves, or were deceived by others, is now manifest from the fact, that most of its meetings and newspapers, not only abstain from discussing them; but, by taking the ground, that the Liberty party shall not act upon them, virtually refuse to discuss them. For, manifestly, to discuss them, under the foregone conclusion, that they shall not be acted upon, is the merest emptiness and hypocrisy.

I am writing this letter, not to prove, that I am a consistent man. All, who know me, know, that I make no pretensions to consistency. I am a man of change. All, who live, not to stereotype, but to correct their errors, must be men of change. All, who live to learn, must be men of change. Upon many things in my antislavery history I look back with regret: and, I hope, by the Divine help, I shall, hereafter, go counter to them. For instance, I would never again take part in organizing a temporary political party; or a party, which goes for the promotion of but a single specific reform. The only political party, which a man has a right to belong to, is one, which is united, and entitled, to continue to the end of time, because it goes for all political righteousness for righteousness in every department, and on every subject, of politics—for the welfare of every class and condition of man. The only political party, in a word, which a man has a right to belong to, is one, which is a party both *of* the whole, and *for* the whole.

But I will stop writing. You and I will, perhaps, be permitted to resume our discussion, the 20th October, in the National Convention, at Buffalo. I hope to be there;—not for the purpose, as that "odd fellow" of the Bangor Gazette will have it, of court-

ing a nomination at the hands of the Convention—for, it will be long, before I give consent to be, and *very* long, before I ask to be, a candidate for civil office;—nor for the purpose of proposing tests of membership in the Liberty party (—a measure, which they, who are bent on making me as odious as possible, in the eyes of the Liberty party, so freely charge on me—) but, I hope to be there to take part in the discussion of the questions—1st. Whether the time has not come—had not, indeed, long ago, come—for the Liberty party to give up all hope of the other parties, and to regard itself as a permanent party—2d. Whether if it so regard itself, it is not bound to inquire, with honest purpose, into all the bearings of its great principle of action—the principle of the equal rights of all men—of equal justice to all men.

Show me the man, who will answer these questions in the affirmative; and who has, also, illustrated his sincere adoption of this great principle of action, by his devotion to the cause of the slave; and you show me the man, whom I welcome, as a good Liberty party man, and of whose future progress in the discernment and espousal of his political duties, he has already given a most gratifying and satisfactory earnest. Of course, gentlemen, you do not believe, that the National Convention will answer these questions in the affirmative. Indeed, judging by what I have seen in your columns, you do not believe, that even the State of New-York will give one vote for them in the Convention. Such faith, however, have I in the power of truth—and such faith, that the hands and hearts of men are susceptible of that power—as to hope, that, notwithstanding present appearances, a majority of the votes of the Convention will be cast for them. What!—the National Convention of the Liberty party, held in October 1847, refuse to look upon the political parties, which are rivalling each other in the work of destroying a sister nation to make more room for slavery!—what! that Convention refuse to look on such parties as hopelessly incorrigible; and the Liberty party as, because of that hopeless incorrigibility, a permanent party! What! that Convention so infatuated, as to believe, that, whilst all the world is waking up to the claims of such momentous questions, as free trade, free soil &c. &c., the Liberty party may remain asleep over them! Impossible! Impossible!! Surely, surely, that Convention will not hold up the Liberty party to be jeered at by every passer-by, as a poor, pitiful, cowardly, and utterly impotent thing! Surely, surely, that Convention will not put forth its hand to strip the Liberty party of all the bright hopes, which cluster so thickly about it, and to cover it with deep and enduring disgrace!

With great regard,

your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

P. S. For obvious reasons, it has been the policy of the Liberty party newspapers to print but little of what I have written, the last few months. I submit, whether they will not owe it to myself and to the cause of truth, to depart from this policy so far, as to print this letter, in every instance, in which they print that to which it is a reply. G. S.

LETTER

OF

GERRIT SMITH TO S. P. CHASE,

ON THE

UNCONSTITUTIONALITY

OF

Every Part of American Slavery.

ALBANY:
S W. GREEN, PATRIOT OFFICE.
1847.

LETTER.

PETERBORO, November 1, 1847.

S. P. CHASE, Esq., Cincinnati:

MY DEAR SIR—At the National Convention of the Liberty party, held in Buffalo, 20th last month, I introduced the following resolution:

"Whereas the pro-slavery obligations of the Federal Constitution are found solely in the abundant speculations on the intentions of that instrument: and whereas its anti-slavery obligations are palpable from its plain declarations:—Resolved, therefore, that, relying on these declarations, and refusing to be misled by those speculations, we hold, that slavery, whether in the District of Columbia, or in any other part of the Nation, is clearly and utterly unconstitutional."

It is not too much to say, that you contributed largely to the defeat of the Resolution. The opposition of a gentleman, who, to his many other titles to the esteem of the Liberty party, adds that of being an eminently able constitutional lawyer, could not have failed to be very effective.

Will you permit me to ask you to look again at the Resolution? You will pardon my impatience to gain your approval of it, when you reflect, how loudly the cause of the slave calls for that approval.

I have, for many years, seen on the face of the Con-

stitution power to abolish every part of American slavery. But, formerly, I did not claim, that this power should be exercised to its full extent. One of the pro-slavery speculations on the intentions of the Constitution is, that the Federal Government was not to demand the abolition of slavery in the "old thirteen States." In common with most abolitionists, I deferred to this speculation, and left the slavery of those States to their own disposal. Now, however, for a considerable length of time, I have turned my back on all such speculations; and have been in favor of taking the Constitution just as it reads. Taking it just as it reads, we, of course, come, promptly, to the conclusion, that it enjoins the abolition of every part of American slavery. And, why should we not take it, just as it reads? Whence, indeed, our permission to take it otherwise? Most emphatically, whence our permission to do so, for the purpose of making out a case against the most essential and sacred human rights?

In its preamble, we find, that the Constitution is not a den of Slavery; but a temple of Liberty. A temple of Liberty, I say;—for the Goddess herself stands in its vestibule. We learn from the preamble, that one of the objects of ordaining and establishing the Constitution was "to secure the blessings of liberty." Passing on, we find, that the Constitution harmonizes with the preamble—the temple with the vestibule. For instance, the Constitution provides, that "the right of the people to

be secure in their persons, &c., against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated;" and that "no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law;" and, that "the United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government." Now, who can doubt, that this language does, on the face of it, and by every rational and just construction of it, give power to abolish every part of American slavery?

But, it is said, that there are passages in the Constitution, which are pro-slavery. In what sense, however, are they pro-slavery? If they do not require the upholding of slavery, nor forbid the abolition of it, then, whether they are, or are not, pro-slavery, is wholly foreign to the question before us; for, then, they do not stand in the way of the exercise of the distinct, and positive, and sufficient, anti-slavery powers of the Constitution—its distinct, and positive, and sufficient powers for abolishing every part of American slavery.

Is it said, that the provision, which refers to the importation of African slaves (, for such I admit to be its reference,) is a pro-slavery taint upon the Constitution? Whether so, or not, is immaterial to our present argument. Does it stand in the way of the abolition of American slavery by the Federal Government? That is the only pertinent question. It manifestly does not;—for it expired by its own limitation, forty years ago.

I have specified several of the anti-slavery powers of the Constitution. This provision, respecting the African slave-trade, calls to mind, and stands in connection with, another of its anti-slavery powers. It is the power to regulate commerce. It was taken for granted, that this power would be used, as it afterwards was used, to abolish the African slave-trade. And, well, might it be taken for granted, —for the only remaining friendship for the trade was confined to South Carolina and Georgia. Even North Carolina, by the tax she had imposed upon it, had, in effect, prohibited it within her borders. To conciliate a handful of persons in two of the States, the exertion against the African slave-trade of the power to regulate commerce was restrained for nineteen years. This is to be regretted. Nevertheless, this temporary restraint of one of its anti-slavery powers did not restrain then, and much less does it restrain now, any other of the anti-slavery powers of the Constitution.

I said, that the African slave-trade was abolished under the power to regulate commerce. The great extent of this power is argued from the fact, that it is, from its definition, just as competent to abolish the inter-State slave-trade, as the African slave-trade; and from the further fact, that to abolish the inter-State slave-trade is to cut the very jugular of American slavery.

We have seen, that the provision, respecting the African slave-trade, stands not in the way of the ab-

...tion of slavery. But, is it to be regarded, as even pro-slavery taint on the Constitution? It is true, that this provision and that, under which the African slave-trade was abolished, and under which the inter-State slave-trade also should be abolished, lack juxtaposition on the pages of the Constitution. Nevertheless, they are to be viewed, as essentially connected with each other; and as inseparable parts of an anti-slavery agreement, into which the "old thirteen States" entered. That agreement might be expressed, as follows:

"The Congress shall have power to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several States, with the exception, that it shall not be used to abolish the African slave-trade earlier than the year 1808."

This agreement was a great anti-slavery concession on the part of the "old thirteen States." At the time, they made it, they had as unquestioned a right, as any other sovereignties on the globe, to carry on the African slave-trade. Nevertheless, in this agreement, they empowered the Central or General Government, which they were creating, to abolish both the African and inter-State slave-trade, with no other reservation than that it shall not abolish the African slave-trade, prior to the year 1808. Clearly then, so far as this agreement gives character to the Constitution and the General Government, they are anti-slavery—not pro-slavery. If my drunken neighbors give me power to break their bottles,

and stop their drinking, and, if need be, lock them up—with no other reservation, than that for nineteen weeks (, a week in the life of a man is more than a year in the life of a nation,) I shall not withhold from them a specified kind of liquor—is the paper, in which they give me this power, to be called an anti-temperance paper?—or am I, for consenting to be its depositary, to be called an anti-temperance man? Manifestly not.

In all arguments to prove the pro-slavery character of the Constitution, great stress is laid on the provision for the apportionment of representatives. But, does this provision require the upholding of slavery? This is not pretended. Does it forbid the exercise, in any direction, of the anti-slavery powers of the Constitution? Nor is this pretended. What then? Why, it operates to the advantage of slavery! If this be so, then all, that need be said, is, that, in such operation, we have another reason for exercising the anti-slavery powers of the Constitution, and abolishing slavery.

It is contended, that this is a wrong provision. But, since it neither requires the upholding of slavery, nor forbids its abolition, it is entirely extraneous to the present argument, whether it is a right, or a wrong provision. I will admit, however, that it is a wrong provision:—but, not for the reason, which many give for calling it such. They call it wrong, because it counts slaves in the apportionment. A slave, they hold, should not be counted politically,

inasmuch as three-fifths of a man, nor even as much as the smallest proportion of a man.—whereas I call it wrong for the directly opposite reason, that it does not suffer the slave to count for a whole man. It is said, that, inasmuch as the slaves are not permitted to vote, they should not be counted in the apportionment. Why, then, should free people of color be counted in it—for they, with small exceptions, are not permitted to vote? Why, then, should women be counted in it—for they are all robbed of their right to vote? Why, then, should the poor white men, who, in some parts of the Nation, are denied the right to vote, be counted in the apportionment?

It is, indeed, a great hardship, that the slaves should be counted in the apportionment of representatives, and, yet, have no vote in the choice of them. But, as the fault in the case is exclusively with those States, which forbid their voting, so, also, is the remedy, exclusively with them. To say, that, because a State Government deprives some of its subjects of the right to vote, the Federal Government should refuse to count the disfranchised ones as men, or even parts of men, is to say, not only, that to a great wrong a greater may be added, but that a greater wrong is the remedy for a less one.

I close my remarks, under this head, by saying, that if the provision before us has, by reckoning the slave to be as much as a part of a man, a tendency to sustain slavery; so has it also, by reckoning him to be no more, a tendency to overthrow it. A slave

State is under a powerful inducement to abolish slavery, to the end, that each of her citizens may become a unit, and that she may thereby have her proportionate representation in the councils of the Nation.

The right to "suppress insurrections" and "domestic violence" is among the inherent powers of Civil Government. Must that right be, therefore, exercised against the rising of the American slave for his liberty? If it be so decided, then, all I have to say, is, that such decision necessarily involves the decision, that the Federal Government must, in the exercise of its ample powers thereto, abolish slavery. If, so long as I sustain a certain relation, I must do wrong, then I must forthwith dissolve such relation. If the Federal Government must recognize and punish as the insurgent, the slave, who rises for his liberty, rather than the slaveholder, who rises to oppose him, then must that Government, if it be only to escape from the construed necessity of doing this wrong, hasten to abolish slavery. Had the Federal Government the power to abolish the trade in stolen goods, as it has the power to abolish slavery, then would its obligation (were it under such,) to protect every existing trade, be an obligation to abolish the trade in stolen goods.

The provision respecting fugitives from service is the only other one relied on to prove the pro-slavery character of the Constitution. But, this provision, under which the master can pursue his apprentice,

and the parent his child, has not, from its language, any application to slaves. It was, however, intended to have such application, says the expounder of the Constitution. But, this brings us to that region of speculation, forbidden by the Resolution, which I offered, and advocated, at Buffalo. I will, notwithstanding, enter the forbidden region far enough to inquire, whether we can properly consent to be governed by an unexpressed intention—an unexpressed conjectured intention—an intention, withal, which could not have been expressed, without revolting the Convention, that framed the Constitution, and the people, who passed upon it. I will tarry long enough in this forbidden region of speculation to admit, that a few members of the Convention did undertake to smuggle slavery into the Constitution, through this provision. Surely, however, we are not bound to yield to their unsuccessful attempt, what we should, perhaps, have been obliged to yield, had their attempt been successful. The fact may be stated here, that they, who undertook to get slavery into the Constitution, without appearing to undertake it; and without using any of those offensive words or phrases, by which it would be seen to be there, undertook an impracticability.

The provision under consideration is numbered among the much talked of pro-slavery compromises of the Constitution. How far it is from being a pro-slavery compromise is manifest from several facts.

1st. It was introduced near the close of the labors of the Convention; and was, at once, adopted unan-

imously—without being referred to a committee, and without debate.

2d. Only the day previous, the mover of a provision for recovering, *in express terms*, fugitive slaves, had to withdraw it precipitately before the opposition, which it aroused.

3d. Some days afterwards, when the Report of the committee on the style and arrangement of the Constitution was taken up, the word "servitude" in another part of the Constitution was struck out, and "service" put in its place. This was done for the assigned reason, that "servitude" expresses the condition of slaves, and "service" the obligations of free persons. But in the provision before us, the reverse change was neither made, nor called for.

4th. I am not certain—but, I believe, that some twenty years elapsed before this provision was successfully applied to the case of a fugitive slave; and never would it have been thus applied, had not the anti-slavery spirit of the close of the eighteenth century died away.

5th. At the time of the Convention, American slavery was an expiring institution; and, probably, none of its members, excepting some three or four Georgians and South Carolinians, cared a straw how many slaves ran away.

I say no more on this point, but that even if this provision, or any other provision of the Constitution, had been, on the part of its framers, a pro-slavery compromise, it would not, therefore, have been such on the part of the people, who adopted it.

We need examine the Constitution no farther. It is enough, that we have adverted to some of its powers, whereby every part and parcel of American slavery can be abolished; and that we have seen, that there is nothing in the Constitution to forbid the exercise of these powers.

And, now, my dear Sir, is it not high time for the Liberty party to have done with running after the pro-slavery speculations on the intentions of the Constitution? Is it not high time to leave to the pro-slavery parties the hunting up of slavery in the intentions of that instrument? Let that miserable work be theirs. But let the Liberty party take the Constitution as it is; and look into its fair free face, instead of mousing about behind its back among the heaps of pro-slavery speculations, which pro-slavery commentators have piled up there. Let the Liberty party, better employed than transforming this Charter of liberty into a device to perpetuate slavery, claim for the Federal Constitution ample power to cleanse the land of slavery:—and let it solemnly pledge itself, before Heaven and Earth, that if the people will give it the ascendency, and permit it to wield the power of the Constitution, American slavery shall quickly feel that power, and quickly be numbered with the things, which have been, but which are not.

With great regard,

Your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

LETTER OF GERRIT SMITH,

TO THE

LIBERTY PARTY OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE.

PETERBORO, March 18th, 1848.

GENTLEMEN,—

To-day's mail brings the news, that your State Election has, again, gone against you. I will not condole with you over this event. I will rather cheer myself with the hope, that you will make it the occasion of your repentance. It is, when we see our unjustifiable schemes baffled, and our expectations of their success overthrown, that there is most reason to hope for our repentance. I know, indeed, that you refused to repent under your similar defeat, a year ago. But, it does not follow, that you will refuse to do so, under this repetition of it. A second lesson in adversity often accomplishes in our hearts what the first failed to do.

It is of two things, that your grieved brethren in the Liberty Party desire you to repent.

1st. OF YOUR SIGNAL BREACH OF FAITH.
2d. OF YOUR RUIN OF THE LIBERTY PARTY.

However the members of the Liberty Party may disagree with each other, as to its scope, and on the question, whether it should be regarded as a temporary, or a permanent party, all of them admit, that it was organized with the distinct and full understanding, that its members were not to vote for persons belonging to proslavery parties—for slaveholders, or for those, who vote for slaveholders. In fact, it was the conviction, that persons, sustaining proslavery relations, should not be voted for, which led to the organization of the Liberty Party. Not too much, then, is it to say, that its members are under a solemn pledge to each other to vote in harmony with that conviction, in which the Party originated. But, in forming your famous Alliance with the Whig Party and Independent Democratic Party, you trampled this solemn pledge under foot. When, for the sake of securing the election to the Senate of the United States of a member of your own Party, you consented to vote for members of those other Parties, you were guilty of breaking faith with your associates in the Liberty Party, and of dealing treacherously with its vital and fundamental principles.

Mr. Colby belonged to the Whig Party. He had signified no purpose of quitting it, and no sorrow for his vote for Henry Clay. Without your help, he could not become Governor, and with it he could. He became Governor. You, also, made Mr. Hale of the Independent Democratic Party a Senator of the United States. For that I would not judge you, too harshly. You, perhaps, thought, that he had embraced the principles of the Liberty Party. I confess, that I thought so, until I saw him go along with yourselves into the Alliance with the Whigs. I could, then, think so, no longer.

I pass on to the other thing, for which you owe repentance—viz., THE RUIN OF THE LIBERTY PARTY. I might have included this under the head of your breach of faith, since it was the direct consequence of it. It will, at least, be admitted, that your breach of faith was the original and, therefore, most responsible, cause of the ruin of the Liberty Party.

The seeming and bewitching success of your Alliance went far to debauch the Liberty Party, and to turn it away from its sacred, stern, disinterested, regard for its principles, to follow the vulgar and corrupting attractions of numbers and victory. If, instead of that Alliance, you had fought and conquered, or fought and failed, on Liberty Party principles, the influence of your pure and glorious example would have fortified those principles throughout the whole extent of the Liberty Party, and made them invincible. But, as it was, there was scarcely a Liberty Party Newspaper in the land, that did not exult over, or at least, acquiesce in your betrayal of Liberty Party principles. Even the Emancipator fell so low, as to frame excuses for that betrayal: and to speak of your "Constitutional necessity" to cast proslavery votes: and to speak of it too, as if it were paramount to your moral and God-ordained necessity not to cast them. Had you been true to the principles of the Liberty Party, the Liberty Party of my own State would not have been false to them on that occasion, when it listened to the seductive utterances of the Whigs, and was, thereby, made willing to choose proslavery men to frame a State Constitution. Of our sixteen thousand Liberty voters, scarcely three thousand abode by their principles on that painfully memorable occasion:—and this amazing defection, instead of being complained of by the Liberty Party Newspapers, was either winked at, or positively commended by the great majority of them.—The defection in this State occurred only a short time after the defection in yours. The defection in your State, though not fully developed until 1846, was, I suppose, agreed upon, and began, ere the middle of 1845.

I have referred to the Emancipator. The leading editorial in the last No. of that Paper refers to my "many wanderings" from the true course of the Liberty Party. It refers, also, to the doctrine formerly held by many Liberty men, in excuse for their "one idea party," that, in respect to the disposal of other political evils, "we could confide in the judgment and fidelity of those, who shall have acted faithfully in regard to this one evil of slavery." I confess, that this was my own doctrine. But, when was it, that my heart, which loved the Liberty Party so well, as to hesitate at no sacrifice of time or money for it, first began to sink with the fear, that this Party would prove itself worthless, not only for every other good, but even to the antislavery cause itself? It was, when I saw even the Emancipator, that most relied on standard bearer of the Liberty Party, coining its ingenious justifications for the New Hampshire Alliance. Then, began my "many wanderings." And did not truth call for them? But, even, if it did not—and, even, if they were ever so guilty—is it not most ungracious, nay, most indecent, for the Emancipator, whose falseness to its trust first drove me to those "wanderings," to reproach me with them?

But, to return from this digression—the year 1847 found you continuing on in that departure from Liberty Party principles, which you began in 1845 and 1846. You confederated with the Whig Party and the Independent Democratic Party to elect General Wilson to Congress, notwithstanding you knew, that he was a member of the Whig Party; and that he had put forth great and unrepented-of efforts to get Henry Clay into the Presidency, and himself into a command in the Mexican army. You, also, confederated with these parties to elect Mr. Tuck of the Independent Democratic Party to Congress; and you did what you could to induce the Liberty Party of the Nation to make Mr. Hale its candidate for the Presidency. Here, again, let me remark, that the Liberty Party in general, its press being proof, has kept nearly equal pace with you in violating its principles. Probably, not one in ten of its Newspapers has remonstrated against the election of General Wilson and Mr. Tuck, or against the nomination of Mr. Hale.

I was a member of the Convention, which put Mr. Hale in nomination. I did not vote for him. I voted for William Goodell—a man, whom, above all others, I should love to see President of the United States, since I know no other man, who has so just, so comprehensive, and so christian, a perception, as he, of the true and Heaven-intended uses of Civil Government. The Scriptures inform us of "a poor wise man," who saved the city. And is it too much to hope, that if that "poor wise man," William Goodell, were made the Chief Magistrate of this Nation, he would, under God, save it?

I say, that I did not vote for Mr. Hale. It was, however, from no light esteem of his mental powers. Nor was it from any objections to his deportment in private life. That he is both an amiable and an intellectual gentleman I had no doubt. Nor did I doubt, that he was opposed to slavery and to the Mexican war. I at that time, supposed him capable of uttering the just and exalted sentiments against both, which he has since uttered.

I declined to vote for Mr. Hale for the sufficient reason, that, whatever respect might be due him from the Liberty Party, it was quite too much to admit a stranger into the very sanctuary of their confidence;—quite too much to make a man of another name and another creed their Presidential candidate. It is not only another Party, to which Mr. Hale belongs:—but it is a Party which, so far as I then knew, or now know, is characterized by not a single one of the distinctive doctrines of the Liberty Party. I have never heard, that "the equal rights of all men" is in the creed of the Independent Democratic Party. I have never heard, that its creed forbids voting for proslavery men. If it does forbid it, then Mr. Hale would not have voted for Governor Colby. If it does forbid it, then Mr. Tuck's first vote in the present Congress would not have been for General Wilson for Speaker—an office, scarcely less influential than the President's; and his second vote would not have been for a slaveholder for Clerk. Nor have I ever heard, that the Independent Democrats regard slavery as unconstitutional. Indeed, the fact, that Mr. Hale does not so regard it, was, obviously, the reason, why the Convention, which nominated him, rejected the Resolution, affirming its unconstitutionality. I express a candid, if not a sound opinion, when I say, that, had the Convention been about to put a Liberty Party man, instead of Mr. Hale, in nomination, it would have adopted, by a vote of more than ten to one, this Resolution, which it rejected. For the last two or three years, the conviction has been general—almost universal in the Liberty Party—that slavery is unconstitutional. Nine tenths of its members, who, during this period, have written and spoken on this subject, have taken this ground. But, the Convention, which nominated Mr. Hale, adapted its sentiments in this, as well as in some other respects, to its candidate. How mortifying, how unexpected, is such a policy, at the hands of Liberty men! A year ago, the Annual Meeting of the Liberty Party of Massachusetts insisted, strenuously, on the unconstitutionality of slavery. But its recent Annual Meeting resolves, that to concern itself with this subject is "a waste of time!" The simple explanation of this shameless conduct of the Massachusetts Liberty Party is that it had, in the mean time, gone out of the Liberty Party for a Presidential candidate—had taken up, for such candidate, a man, who denies that slavery is unconstitutional—and that, in order to get for him the votes of thousands of Whig and Democratic votes on which it is foolishly and madly calculating, it felt the necessity of recalling, or concealing, such "fanatical" Liberty party doctrines, as the unconstitutionality of slavery.

Mr. Hale's late speeches and communications show, that he does not admit slavery to be unconstitutional.

Alas, what a successful temptation to abandon Liberty Party principles has the nomination of Mr. Hale proved to be! Scarcely a Liberty Party Newspaper, that now says a word against the Constitutionality of slavery! Look, for an illustration of editorial apostacy, to poor Wesley Bailey, Editor of the Liberty Press of Utica. Until the nomination of Mr. Hale, no Paper was more decided, than his, against the Constitutionality of slavery: and, only, the very month before that, in which Mr. Hale was nominated, he advocated, in two State antislavery meetings, the passage of that very same Resolution, whose rejection by the Buffalo Convention we have spoken of. Since Mr. Hale's nomination, Mr. Bailey's Paper has given no more evidence of his opposition to the doctrine of the Constitutionality of slavery than it would have done, had John C. Calhoun or James K. Polk been its editor. I should think, that an editor, be he Wesley Bailey, or some other of the no less delinquent Liberty Party editors, who can eat his own words, and betray the slave, on a point so vital, would, out of very self-disgust, try to spit in his own face.

But, to return to our examination of the creed of the Independent Democratic Party. I had no satisfactory evidence, at the time the Buffalo Convention put Mr. Hale in nomination, that the Independent Democrats are abolitionists. I am now convinced, that they are not:—that they are but opposed to the extension of slavery;—mere Wilmot proviso-men—and nothing more.

Mr. Hale has, recently, expressed himself on the floor of the Senate, as follows:

"Permit me to say to the Honorable Senator (Mr Butler of South Carolina,) in all kindness, and with no disposition to be offensive, that he entirely misstates and misapprehends the character of that portion of the American People, whom I am supposed to represent on this subject. Once, for all, let me say, that we desire no interference with, nor disturbance of, the existing institutions of the States. If the institution, of which you speak, be a blessing, bless yourselves with it: if it be a curse, stagger under it, as you may: but let us remain free from it—let us alone. It is all, that we desire—all that we ask."

Now, I do not understand Mr. Hale to mean by this language, that, as a man, he feels no concern for the three millions of his enslaved countrymen. To impute such indifference to him is uncharitable, unjust. But, I do understand him to mean by this language (, for this is the only other construction, which can be put upon it,) that, as a member of the Independent Democratic Party—that, as a political man—he has nothing to do with the wrongs of those millions—that, as such, he is but opposed to the extension of slavery. Perhaps, he also means, that the Liberty Party, as well as the Independent Democratic Party, is but opposed to the extension of slavery. His nomination at the hands of the Liberty Party may have deluded him into this belief. Nevertheless, every true Liberty Party man scouts the idea, that his Party was organized for the tame and worthless purpose of preventing the extension of slavery; or for any lower purpose than that of uprooting and scattering the whole system of American slavery.

Again—another evidence, that the Independent Democrats are not abolitionists, is to be seen in the fact, that neither he, nor Mr. Tuck, has moved for the abolition of slavery, either in the District of Columbia, or any where else. An abolitionist is one, who is in favor of abolishing slavery, and who works for its abolition. An antislavery person is one, who may be but opposed to slavery. Mr. Hale has, indeed, presented the Petitions of others for the abolition of slavery. Even this, however, he did with apologies, and with disclaimers of the purpose to waste the time, or disturb the temper, of the Senate. Had he felt, in his inmost soul, the justice of the cause entrusted to him, he would have been as free from apologies and disclaimers, as was Martin Luther at Worms, or Ethan Allen at Ticonderoga. The cap of Justice is always upon her head—never in her hand:—and there are no circumstances, in which she owes to her foes any apologies, or any demonstrations of bashfulness.

Alas, that the Liberty Party, which, ere it fell under the control of man of policy, would admit no plea whatever for slavery—not even its Constitutionality;—and which sent messages to the slaves, exhorting them to regard the laws, by which they are bound, as but laws of pirates; and to take, without leave, the horses and boats of their oppressors to help themselves out of slavery:—alas, that such a Party should, so soon, have come to such a pass of degeneracy, as to turn its back upon its own whole-hearted and outspoken representatives of its righteous and characteristic principles, to choose for its champion and mouthpiece, one, who disdains membership in it, and has no sympathy with its doctrines;—and to choose him, too for the very reason, that, being destitute of such sympathy, and being a man of neutralities, negations, and apologies, in the antislavery cause, he may get the votes of thousands, who will not give their votes to a positive and known abolitionist!

I said, that I did not vote for Mr. Hale's nomination. I add, that I cannot vote for his election. I cannot do so, because to do so, I must quit the Liberty Party; and I am not willing to quit it. I cannot do so, because I can have no part in killing the Liberty Party; and the vote of every true Liberty Party man for Mr. Hale is a stab in its vitals. Let those vote for Mr. Hale, who are weary of, or have never acknowledged, the stringent principles of the Liberty Party. I should rejoice to see all the Whigs and Democrats in the Nation vote for him, or Mr. Palfrey, or Mr. Giddings. But, if I am correct in my facts concerning Mr. Hale, that, nor I, nor any other man, who credits these facts, can, without gross dishonesty, vote for Mr. Hale, and yet claim to be a member of the Liberty Party—of such a Liberty Party, as I have described.

I said, that I am not willing to quit the Liberty Party. I do not forget, that many accuse me of having already forsaken it:—and I do not forget, that many say, that I deserve to be expelled from it. Even, my old friend, Alvan Stewart, recommends, that persons like myself, be violently thrust out—be actually mobbed out—of Liberty Party Meetings:—and there are Liberty Party Papers shameless enough to print this recommendation, and Liberty Party men shameless enough to express their delight in it. And, what is my offence? It is, that, for the last two or three years, I have urged the Liberty Party to regard itself as a permanent Party; and apply its principle of "the equal rights of all men" in every direction—in the direction of the poor white man, as well as the-

poor black man;—for the overthrow of tariffs and land-monopolies, as well as of slavery. It is not claimed that I have advised the relaxation of any of the duties of the Liberty Party, or the slightest trench upon its antislavery character:—and every one, who knows me, knows, that I would sooner lose my hand than suffer it to deposite a vote for a proslavery man. Nevertheless, I am to be denied the appellation of a Liberty Party man!—and, this too, whilst Alvan Stewart, and Weslay Bailey, and Silas Hawley, &c. &c., whose eagerness, only two short years ago, to vote for proslavery men neither reason nor religion could restrain, are to be acknowledged as sound Liberty Party men! But, never mind. A little more time will set this matter right. Such monstrous injustice—such a gross absurdity—cannot be long-lived.

What I said against voting for Mr. Hale should have been immediately followed by one or two things more on that subject. But it is not too late to mention them.

On seeing the proslavery votes of Mr. Tuck, at the beginning of the present Session of Congress, I was forcibly reminded of the ingenious argument, which was used in the Buffalo Convention to induce the Convention to nominate Mr. Hale. "Mr. Hale," said his advocates, "is of the same party, and therefore, of the same political principles, with Mr. Tuck: and that Mr. Tuck is worthy of the confidence of Liberty Party men, and is, indeed, an actual Liberty Party man, is evident from the fact, that the Liberty Party of New-Hampshire made him one of its Delegates to this Convention—ay, and (, as it was emphatically added,) the Chairman of its Delegates." Mr. Tuck did not attend the Convention. Perhaps, it was not expected that he should. Perhaps, the only purpose in appointing him was to make room for the ingenious argument I have referred to.

On my way home from the Buffalo Convention, Austin Willey of Maine and Hiram Cummings of Massachusetts made use of this same ingenious argument to reconcile me to the nomination of Mr. Hale. Will those esteemed friends permit me to ask them, whether they would, *now*, have me vote for Mr. Hale, because he is like Mr. Tuck? And will they also permit me to ask them, whether they can themselves be true Liberty Party men, and yet vote for Mr. Hale, provided he is like Mr. Tuck?

I said, that the Liberty Party is ruined. It is, however, not irretrievably ruined. It will recover itself, and be all the stronger for the painful experience, which its erring members have brought upon it. But, what it lacks, that it may, immediately, be itself again—ay, and very much more than itself—is, that these erring members do, immediately, repent. And with whom can the repentance begin so properly, and so effectually, as with yourselves, who led the way in the mischief, which is to be repented of? Come, then, gentlemen, and divorce yourselves, forever, from your Colbys and Wilsons and Tucks and Hales, and return to the Liberty Party, and re-espouse its principles, and resume your fellowship with the men, who have ever faithfully represented its principles. These principles are, still, as precious, as you yourselves esteemed them to be, ere you yielded to the temptation to betray them. To refuse to vote for proslavery men is, still, notwithstanding your distrust of it, the most effectual way to make slavery infamous, and slaveholders sick of it. And, let me add my testimony in behalf of the continued preciousness of the principles of the Liberty Party, that its tried and never-found-wanting men—its Birneys and Goodells and Greens—are still as worthy of your confidence, as you yourselves thought them to be, before you turned your backs upon them, to run after men, whose merit is, that you can hope to elect them.

Doubtless, your taste of ballot-box victories, in 1846, created in you an increased relish and hankering for other such victories:—and this will make you the more reluctant to retrace your steps. But, even, if you mean to persist in worshipping King Numbers, you will find it to your advantage to get upon the Liberty Party track again. Up to the time, when you quit it, there was no State in the Union, which promised so well for the slave, as did yours. Had you not quit it, the Independent Democrats and multitudes of the Whigs and Democrats would, ere this, have been attracted to you. Your folly in going down to their level was no less than would be that of the Temperance man, who, when he had induced his drunken neighbor to give up rum and brandy, should go down from the ground of total abstinence to meet half-way his half-reformed neighbor, and drink wine and beer with him. The subsequent falling off in your numbers has taught you, that, in parting with your principles in 1846, you parted with your power to command new votes, and lost the confidence of many, whose votes you had hitherto had. Among those, who are laboring in your State to promote the cause of the Alliance and the election of Mr. Hale is Elder Benjamin Shaw. It did not at all surprise me to find, that, in a report, which, some two months ago, he made of his labors, he uses the following language:

"In one town three of the most prominent abolitionists staid away from my lecture. They are disaffected, on account of our men going for Colby for Governor and Wilson for Congress, and siding and bargaining with the Whigs:—and a large number, who used to vote with us, have gone back for the same reasons; so that I fear we shall lose much more by the Alliance in the long run, than we have gained. Let Massachusetts and other States take warning by this. It is the very policy, that ruined the antimasonic party, and the policy that the Whigs urged in the National Election, and entirely contrary to the first principles of the Liberty Party. Neither Party will make such bargains, unless they are in a hopeless minority: and if we will be foolish enough to hold the ladder for them to climb up, they will haul up the ladder after them, and we may get up, as we can."

I said, that it did not, at all, surprise me to find my old friend Shaw using this language. Nor did it, at all, surprise me, that you were defeated in the State Election, a year ago. Nor does it at all surprise me, that you are defeated in your State Election, the present week—and, that too, by a majority three times as great, as the majority against you, last year. Nor will it, at all, surprise me to find Mr. Hale's vote, next Fall, but one half as large, as was Mr. Birney's, at the last Presidential Election. Mr. Hale is too worthy a man, and too nearly an abolitionist, to get the votes of Wilmot proviso-men:—and why should he, who holds no one of the principles, which distinguishes the Liberty Party, get the votes of half of the members, or of even one of the members of that Party?

Much is said of the "New-Hampshire revolution". In that very eloquent speech, but for which the Buffalo Convention could, hardly, have been wrought up to the unprincipled and suicidal policy of going beyond the limits of the Liberty Party and its principles for a Presidential Candidate—in that very effective speech, Mr. Henry B. Stanton said, amid thunders of applause: "Thomas Morris went home from Congress to do nothing;—and John P. Hale went home from Congress to revolutionize New-Hampshire!" But New-Hampshire has not been revolutionized. The game was tricked out of the hands of the Democratic Party: and that Party has been, ever since, successfully revenging itself upon the prostrate Alliance.

But, I must close this too extended communication. Think not, that it has been prompted by an more than a recently sprung-up feeling. Your first treason to Liberty Party principles and the nearly simultaneous one in this State have been, ever since, among my deepest griefs. They and the Liberty Party indorsement of them constitute the reason, in my public letter of August 6th, 1846, for refusing to attend Liberty Party Meetings. In closing this communication, in which, because I respect and love you, I have dealt plainly and faithfully with you, I, again, call you to repentance. How happy, if the call should not be in vain; and if, among the fruits of your repentance, you should, forthwith, cast away your spurious, mongrel, Liberty Party, and reconstruct a true Liberty Party—a Party, which will sooner perish than vote for a proslavery man—and a Party, too, which will practically recognize the doctrine of the equal rights of all men; and devote itself, not only to the cause of personal freedom, but to the cause of peace, free-trade, free-soil, and, in a word, to the fulfilment of all political righteousness! Come, gentlemen, and rally such a Party, without delay: and let us see its representatives at the National Liberty Party Convention which is to be held in Buffalo, the 14th and 15th days of next June, for the purpose of nominating candidates for President and Vice President, and of setting forth the principles of a true Civil Government and a true Liberty Party.

Very respectfully,

your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

The following Resolutions, being substantially the same as those offered at two of its previous meetings, were, with the exception of one dissenting voice in the cases of Nos. 4, 6, and 9, passed unanimously by the Church of Peterboro, June 1st, 1849.

1st. Resolved, That we still cordially approve of the 5th in the series of Resolutions, unanimously adopted by this Church, December 2d, 1843; viz. "Resolved, That for the edification both of its members and of others, and for the honoring and establishing of the truth, this Church will, as there shall be occasion for it, express its convictions in relation to doctrines and practices."

2d. Whereas this Church did, on the 4th day of last February, with the single exception of him, who has since ceased to be its pastor, and to reside amongst us, vote unanimously, that "the Sabbath is not a Jewish institution, but an institution for all men; and that its law is of universal and perpetual obligation";—Resolved, therefore, that we trust, that its future votes in behalf of this Divine and precious institution will lack not even one of perfect unanimity.

3d. Resolved, That, in our judgment, it is very unreasonable and improper to claim for other persons than christians the right to take part in our Church Meetings, and that it is scarcely less so to claim it for other christians than such, as practically acknowledge their membership and identity with us; and that, hence, we regard a part of the votes which were cast on the question of the continued pastorship of our late pastor (a part, withal, sufficiently numerous to control the action of the Church,) as intrusive, illegitimate, and not entitled to the least respect, consideration, or influence.

4th. Whereas Gerrit Smith did, on the 20th day of last February, offer, in our Church Meeting, the following Resolutions, viz:

"Resolved, That, notwithstanding the rejection of the Sabbath by our beloved pastor is a source of surprise and sorrow to us all, we, nevertheless, do all recognize him to be still our fellow christian, and, consequently, our fellow Church member, and do all confide in him, and love him as such.

Resolved, That, notwithstanding it is the duty of a Church to acknowledge in each of its members the right to be faithful to his or her convictions, and to teach and exhort, as he or she may have ability and opportunity; it, nevertheless, does not follow, that it may choose for its teacher—least of all, that it may single out for its stated and leading teacher—one, who inculcates doctrines and practices, which, in its judgment, are fatal to its prosperity and destructive of christianity."

And whereas the mover of these Resolutions did frankly avow, that the second of them was drawn up for the purpose of preparing the way, kindly and gently, to dissolve the relation between this Church and its pastor, who had, unhappily, come to hold, that, whatever be the day, there is, on such day, out of the hours of public worship, the same liberty for amusements and manual labors, that there is on any other day; and who had, in short, come to disbelieve in and to contemn the Sabbath, and to reproach and denounce it, as the grand superstition, which hinders the progress and triumph of christianity: And, whereas, the mover of these Resolutions has, for having offered them, and whereas others have, for having voted for them, been held up to the public scorn and hatred, as the persecutors and cruel injurers of our late pastor: Resolved, therefore, that if the offering and voting for these Resolutions be wrong, it must be because mildness, truth reason, love (,for such are the characteristicks of these Resolutions,) are wrong.

5th. Resolved, That the fact, that, in all probability, not one member of this Church would have endured the idea of calling our late pastor, had the lamentable change in his views of the Sabbath been foreseen, and the further fact, that months were suffered to elapse after his first open avowal of this change, ere one step was taken for the dissolution of his pastoral relation with this Church, are an ample refutation of the charge of impatience and unkindness, which is brought against those, who desired such dissolution.

6th. Whereas the members of this Church, who are unwilling to vote for a person for its pastor and leading teacher, who rejects the Sabbath, are charged with being, therein, sectarian: Resolved, that, in reply to this charge, we affirm, that the breaking up of the christian brotherhood is the crime, which, alone, constitutes sectarianism; and that even he, who collects a party from such brotherhood, or joins a sect for the purpose of promoting a cherished doctrine or institution, is not to be condemned as a sectarian for his however excessive or disproportionate attachment to such doctrine or institution, but, simply, for the sectarian means, which he resorts to to promote such doctrine or institution.

7th. Resolved, That the door of our fellowship is still open to christians of every name and type; and that, whether with the Baptist they are for immersion, or with the Episcopalian for infant baptism, or with the Presbyterian for Calvinism, or with the Methodist for Arminianism; or whether they favor these or those views of the Sabbath, or these or those views of pastoral and ministerial qualifications; we cannot, so long as they abide with us, and hold to the indissolubleness of the christian brotherhood, wound and wrong them with the charge of sectarianism;—for, so long as they abide with us, we cannot regard them as guilty of that great sin. They may, for their errors of faith or practice, be obnoxious to censure and discipline, but not to the charge of sectarianism.

8th. Resolved, That, instead of believing, as, under pain of being stigmatized as sectarians, we are called on to believe, that the members of a Union Church may, for the sake of unanimity in the choice of a pastor, be bound to vote for one who despises and tramples upon doctrines and institutions, which they hold to be vital to the prosperity of their Church and to the progress and triumph of christianity—resolved, that, instead of believing, that they may, thus, school themselves into indifference to such doctrines and institutions, or, at least, smother, for the time being, their convictions of the value and indispensableness of such doctrines and institutions—we do still heartily subscribe to the 8th in the series of Resolutions referred to, a part of which is: "Whereas there is a prevailing delusion, that a Union Church requires a surrender of private judgment and a compromise of truth; and that, but for this surrender and compromise, the contentions in such Church would be too great to be endured: Resolved, therefore, that the members of a Union or Gospel Church are not only free to entertain their respective views both of doctrine and practice, but are bound to inculcate them on their brethren, and to rebuke the rejection of them; and resolved, further, that such freedom and faithfulness do not only not engender fatal strife, but do actually produce assimilation of character and that true peace, which follows purity."

9th. Whereas we are told, that if a pastor or minister be but admitted to be a christian, his pastorship or ministry, so far as his faith is concerned, must, whatever be his beliefs or practices, be acquiesced in; and, whereas, we are, further, told, that this novel and amazing doctrine springs legitimately from the principles of the "Church of Peterboro," and that to dissent from it is to be guilty of violating these principles: Resolved, therefore, that the "Church of Peterboro" has but one peculiar and distinctive principle—viz. the principle, that the christians of a place, or community, are, and are to act as, the one Church—the one unsectarian, indivisible, and indissoluble Church—of such place or community—and, consequently, that to charge persons, notwithstanding they practically, and truly, and lovingly, cling to this principle, with violating the principles of the "Church of Peterboro," and that too, simply because of their attachment to this or that doctrine, to this or that institution, is utterly indefensible and unreasonable.

10th. Resolved, That the foregoing Resolutions be read in our public assembly, the next Sabbath.

At the meeting of the "Church of Peterboro," held July 7th, 1849, the following Resolutions were passed, without a dissenting voice:

1st. Resolved, that the clerk, as well as the owner, of the store, in which is carried on the traffic in intoxicating drinks, is out of his place, when preaching the gospel; and is especially offensive, when presuming to preach it to the "Church of Peterboro"—a Church, which has ever maintained high and strong testimonies against this accursed traffic, and a large share of whose members forsook their former fellow worshippers for no reason more than for the reason, that many of those fellow worshippers refused to unite with them in such testimonies.

2d. Resolved, that we are thankful, that, with the single exception of the individual referred to in the foregoing Resolution (,and even he ceased to reside among us, when he became such exception,) none, since their identification of themselves with the "Church of Peterboro," have been guilty of voting for anti-abolitionists, or of drinking intoxicating liquors, or of contributing to the manufacture of them, or of connecting themselves with stores or other establishments, in which is carried on the traffic in intoxicating drinks.

3d. Resolved, that the foregoing Resolutions be read in our public assembly, to-morrow.

15 July 20, 1849

To the Church of Peterboro:

A short time ago, the amazing doctrine was started among us, that a Church is not at liberty to except, on the score of his faith, to a candidate for the pastorship, so long as it admits, that he is a christian, and has aptness to teach. And, *now*, another strange doctrine is broached among us.

There is a tea, coffee, and liquor merchant. He has one clerk for his tea department, one for his coffee department, and another for his liquor department. It is admitted, for the sake of the argument, that these clerks are all hostile to each other's departments, and turn up their noses, very high, at the immorality of each other's employment.

Now, the strange doctrine referred to is, that the tea and coffee clerks, notwithstanding they receive their wages out of the profits of the store, and notwithstanding when endeavoring to collect a debt due to the store, they do not pause to inquire, if liquor for a beverage be not a part of the consideration of the debt, and notwithstanding they admit, that the liquor department stamps the store and its owner with wickedness—the strange doctrine, we say, is that the tea and coffee clerks are not also to be charged with wickedness, and with holding a guilty relation to the store and its owner.

It is, sometimes, said, in order to show, that this relation is an innocent one, that the liquor department is a small affair—is not established, or maintained, for its own sake—but, merely, to accommodate, please, and multiply, the customers of the other departments. But, how does this help the strange doctrine? Suppose, that the liquor room be converted into a gambling room on a small scale, or a brothel on a small scale, and that the object of the conversion be not direct profit from either the one or the other, but only to accommodate, please, and multiply, the customers of the tea and coffee departments—would not the connexion of these departments with the gambling room or brothel, however small an affair might be the gambling room or brothel, be a guilty connexion? And, pray, how is the principle, involved in the case, at all affected by having, instead of an attraction to rum-loving customers, an attraction to card-playing customers, or an attraction to licentious customers? In former times, it was the practice of country merchants "to treat" their customers, to the end, that their customers might not only come again, but might be excited to buy more freely of the cloths, teas, ribands, &c. Now the "treating" was, in itself, a loss—an entire loss of all the liquor used in it. Nevertheless, did it not stain with sin the sales, which were made of the cloths, teas, ribands, &c.?

It is argued, that the tea and coffee clerks, in the given case, are no more responsible for the liquor department than are the ostler and maid of a rum-tavern for its liquor department. But, that is responsibility enough. The liquor of the rum-tavern is largely relied on to attract custom; and, therefore, does the liquor of the rum-tavern go far to create demand for, and furnish the means to pay the wages of, ostlers and maids. Moreover, a tavern is a unit; and the employment in one part of it is responsible for the character of the employment in another part of it. So, too, is a store a unit; and wickedness in one branch of it taints with wickedness every other branch of it.

Ingenuity has taxed itself to the utmost to commend to you this strange doctrine, of which we have been speaking. Your sympathies have been appealed to in behalf of one, who, unhappily, has identified himself with this doctrine. Your warnings of him, however warm and pure the love, which prompted them, have been construed into persecution; and, in the view of some, who are very partial to him, the arguments against his strange doctrine are utterly destitute of force, if not, also, of honesty.

We have reason to rejoice, however, that, with some two or three exceptions, you have set yourselves against this strange doctrine. Alas, that there should be these few exceptions! Few as they are, they may, nevertheless, suffice to encourage our offending brother in his sin and shame, and in his mischief to the cause of temperance and religion. Oh, that we might speedily try the power of our united testimony in bringing him to repentance!

God grant, that the Church of Peterboro may stand fast in its integrity. It is true, that the excitable and unstable multitude have, of late, pressed hard against it. No less true, and infinitely more lamentable, is it, that there are still some remains of internal divisions to weaken our hands, to bring reproach upon our name, and to diminish our influence and usefulness. But, God be praised, that it is, also, true, that, under His vouchsafed care and love, an unflinching adherence on the part of the Church of Peterboro to her temperance principles and her other principles will save her from being overthrown.

PETERBORO, July 20th, 1849.

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PETERBORO, August 9, 1849.

HIRAM P. CROZIER, *New-York:*

DEAR SIR,

I acknowledge your politeness, in sending me a copy of your Circular.

I confess, that I wrote the Resolutions of the Church of Peterboro, embodied in, and complained of in, your Circular. These Resolutions do not say, that you are in the liquor-department of your store. But you regard them as uncandid for not admitting, that you are not in that department. In my own humble judgment, such admission was entirely uncalled for, and would have been entirely superfluous. In my own humble judgment, it is quite immaterial, whether of the "six to twelve" clerks, of whom you speak, you are the clerk, who sells the sugars, or the clerk, who sells the teas, or the clerk, who sells the intoxicating drinks. Your several provinces are all parts of one whole. Your store is a unit, for the character of which every part of that unit is responsible; and iniquity, permitted in one of the branches of the store, stamps the whole store with iniquity. That the clerks in your store should seek to rid themselves of responsibility for the moral character of each other's departments is exceedingly and ludicrously vain. This responsibility inevitably attaches to them, if only from the fact, that they all receive their wages out of the joint proceeds of their several departments. This responsibility inevitably attaches to them, if only from the fact, that they are all expected to be faithful to the interests of their employers. An evidence, that *you* are not willing to disappoint this expectation, is found in the fact, that you defend your right to collect debts due to your store, whatever may be the consideration of the debts. Indeed, when in this County, a few weeks since, you were so faithful to your employers, as to travel many miles to collect a debt due to them, which is, as I learn, a debt, not only partly, but wholly, for intoxicating drinks.

I observe, that one of your excuses for your connexion with a rum-store, is, that such merchants, as your employers are, adopt the cunning policy of having a variety of moral character among their clerks—of having a religious clerk in one department, and an irreligious clerk in another. You inform me, that, even in a rum-store, there is "some segment of the circle," where there is "a field for a temperance man": and you leave me to infer, since you, a minister of the gospel, have found a clerkship in it, that there is "some segment of the circle" in a rum-store, which even a minister of the gospel can occupy to the pecuniary advantage of the owner of such store. I have, long, been aware, that it is the cunning policy of our demagogues to get a minister of the gospel to eulogize, and give currency to, the wicked man, whom they nominate for President, or Governor, or some other high office. But, never, until I read your Circular, did I know, that rum-merchants practice a like trick, and seek to spread a captivating air of sanctity over their establishment, by installing a minister of the gospel into one of their clerkships. Alas, to what strange uses ministers of the gospel are put now-a-days!

I wish your case to have the benefit of every admission, from which it can derive benefit. Hence, I take pleasure in admitting, that you told me, that the liquor-department in your store is quite a subordinate one, and that it is kept up, not so much for its direct profits, as to accommodate and satisfy, and retain your customers. What, however, if for the purpose of accommodating, satisfying, and retaining their customers, your employers shall add another attraction to their store, and set up a brothel-department in it? Will you, even then, consent to be their clerk? You hesitate to answer me. You are at a loss, whether to say "Yes" or "No". For, if you say "Yes", the people will all laugh at you, and you will even laugh at yourself; and if you say "No", you will, thereby, not only spoil the consistency and logic of your Circular, but you will, also, expose yourself to the searching and confounding inquiry, why you draw this wide distinction between the moral character of a brothel-department and the moral character of a rum-department. Again, it is not competent for you to draw this distinction, after having, as you have done in your Circular, stigmatized the rum-department in your store, as "WICKED AND ABOMINABLE". By what stronger words than these can you characterize a brothel-department?

You charge upon the Church, with which I am connected, "sectarianism and intolerance." Pardon the remark, that you are not, now, in circumstances to discuss the merits of a Church. Ere you can be adapted to such discussion, your hands, which are now red with the guilt of your business-connexions, must be cleansed by the tears of your repentance.

You close with charging upon me "transcendent faults and blunders". I do not wonder at it:—and I add, that you can get all owners and clerks of rum-stores, and also all distillers a[illegible]ll farmers, who supply distillers with grain, to join you in making this charge. It is no secret, and no strange thing, that I am unpopular and unsavory with yourself and the whole rum-fraternity.

Your faithful friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

PETERBORO, August 25, 1849.

Chancellor WALWORTH:

DEAR SIR:

I have read a paper, signed by yourself, as Chairman of a Committee. I found it among the proceedings of a Convention, held in Rome 15th instant. In that paper you claim, that democracy and slavery may be in full fellowship with each other; and that the Southern slaveholder—that is, he, who buys and sells his fellow-men, and compels them to toil without wages, and seals up their minds in darkness, and robs them of every right, and subjects them to every wrong, may be as sound a Democrat, as the Northern freeman, whose whole soul revolts at slavery.

Of this doctrine I complain. I do not complain of it, because I belong to that section of the Democratic party, which is the rival of yours. I belong to neither—though I confess my strong preference for the one, which has identified itself, so bravely and usefully, with the principle of the non-extension of slavery. May it continue to travel upward, until it reach the summit of truth. I am still connected with the Liberty Party—with that little handful, who are associated upon the principle of "EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL"; and who, amidst the pernicious and horrid counterfeits of civil government, are endeavoring to realize the true and divine idea of it. I can belong to no political party of lower aims than an every way righteous government; to none, which does not consent, that every man has as full and absolute a right to the soil, as to the light and the air; to none, which builds up tariff-barriers across the human brotherhood; to none, which would load one generation with the debts of another; to none, which would consume the earnings of the people upon fortifications and standing armies and navies; to none, which would license, or even permit, that frightful danger to life and property, which springs from the manufacturing of madmen in dram-shops; to none, which tolerates either the extension, or existence, of slavery; to none, in short, which believes, that such a monstrosity as slavery—such a devourer of all rights—such a murderer of the body and the soul—is capable of legalization. You cannot legalize every thing. You cannot legalize robbery and murder. Much less can you legalize slavery—that infernal compound, the numerous horrible elements of which include both robbery and murder.

My complaint of the doctrine of your paper is because it grossly misrepresents democracy. The etymological meaning of the word is its true meaning. Democracy is not, as many suppose it, anarchy. It is government. Nor is it oligarchy or aristocracy, as many suppose it. It is a governing by the people. It is the governing of all by all. That democracy, therefore, which shuts out a part of the people from governing, is an imposture. Emphatically such must be your democracy, which not only denies to a part of the people their right to participate in governing, but which sanctions their enslavement, and the annihilation of all the rights of their manhood.

The immortal paper, whose language is: "all men are created equal; are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness", contains, in this language, not only the teachings of democracy, but, also, the definition and meaning of democracy. But, what can be more absurd than to say, that, in the light of this language, he can be a democrat, who, with the besom of slavery, makes sweeping and utter destruction of human rights? No wonder, that a slaveholder pronounced the Declaration of Independence "a fanfaronade of nonsense". Such it must be in the eyes of every person, who is so perverted, as to believe slaveholding to be right, or, in any degree, compatible with sound politics.

I, further, complain of the doctrine of your paper, because that, in grossly misrepresenting democracy, it as grossly misrepresents christianity. I grant, that the doctrine, if uttered by an infidel, would not disparage christianity—for, in that case, no one would hold christianity responsible for it. But, it is uttered by yourself, whose high standing and wide influence in the Church are scarcely surpassed by your high standing and wide influence in the State. With many, therefore, it will pass for a doctrine of christianity. You, of course, put it forth as such. You, of course, regard your politics to be the politics of the Bible. You, of course, are in a political party but for the purpose of carrying out the politics of the Bible. You, of course, have no sympathy with the attempts, which are made to draw a line between a man's politics and his religion. You, of course, make his politics a part, and an especially significant and interpreting part of his religion. You, of course, will not allow, that his religion is any better than his politics, or that he, who is a rogue in his politics, is any better than a rogue in his religion. You, of course, believe, that, though a man traffic in human flesh, he may, nevertheless, be, in God's sight, politically sound; and you, therefore, believe, that, in the Rome Convention, you inculcated but the Bible view of democracy and civil government. You, of course, regard yourself as expounding the Bible, when you take part in the meetings of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and in the meetings of the American Temperance Union; and you, of course, regard yourself, as having done no less, when you told the people at Rome to make no account of a man's slaveholding in their estimation of his political soundness.

I am clearly right, then, in saying, that your doctrine of democracy is put forth as a doctrine of christianity. But am I clearly right, in saying, that it misrepresents christianity?

Democracy is, indeed, a doctrine of christianity. But is it *your* democracy? Christianity is thoroughly imbued with the democratic spirit. But is it with *your* democratic spirit? Your democracy ascribes a vile nature to man—for it holds him to be fit for the yoke of slavery and for a state of mere chattelship. Your democracy makes the widest inequality among men—taking all power from one, and giving all power to another. Not so, however, with the democracy of christianity. That claims a high dignity for man, and tells us, that he was made but "a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honor". That contends for the equality of men; and says, that "God is no respecter of persons", and that "He hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth"; and that the provisions of grace are equally for all men; and that Christ came into the world to "taste death for every man."

Such is the democracy of christianity! How grossly, then, is she misrepresented, and how deeply wronged, when she is claimed to be the justifier and author of your spurious democracy—a democracy, which is as ready to go *for* slavery, as *against* slavery—as ready to be in full fellowship with the friends and upholders, as with the foes and opponents, of slavery!

I will not doubt, that you believe your proslavery democracy to be the truth. Nevertheless, it is a falsehood, and as impudent and pernicious a falsehood, as was ever set up. A DEMOCRACY, WITHOUT ANTISLAVERY IN IT, IS AS ABSURD AND IMPOSSIBLE, AS A CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT CHRIST IN IT. To this falsehood, that democracy may be proslavery, our guilty and infatuated nation still clings: and whilst it does, it will, of course, refuse to deliver the slave. Here is one of the evils, which our country suffers from this falsehood, to which your and other influential names give currency.

One falsehood creates necessity for another: and, hence is it, that our antislavery Constitution, which contains not one line for slavery, is claimed to be proslavery, and to forbid the abolition of slavery by any branch of the Federal Government. This is claimed, notwithstanding, that one of its avowed objects is to "secure the blessings of liberty"; and, notwithstanding, that it provides, that the "people be secure in their persons against unreasonable seizures"; and that "no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law". How different was Patrick Henry's interpretation of the Constitution, given in the Virginia Convention in 1788, from the present interpretation of it! Said this great man: "Have they (Congress) not power to provide for the general defence and welfare? May they not think, that this calls for the abolition of slavery? May they pronounce all slaves free, and will they not be warranted by that power? There is no ambiguous implication or logical deduction. The paper (the Constitution) speaks to the point. They have the power in clear, unequivocal terms; and will clearly and certainly exercise it."

It is often said, that the Federal Constitution contains a provision for the surrender of fugitive slaves; and that it, therefore, forbids the abolition of slavery by any of the powers of the Federal Government. But where is such provision? I see in the Constitution a provision for the surrender of apprentices and minor children;—but that provision no more refers to a slave than to a stone. The Southern slave-code defines the slave to be "a chattel to all intents, purposes and constructions whatever"; and, hence,

from a slave, no more than from a stone, can anything be "due". But, even were it true, that the Federal Constitution requires us, whilst slavery continues, to surrender fugitive slaves, what should be the effect of such requirement but to hasten us to use the powers, which we Constitutionally possess, for abolishing every part and parcel of American slavery?

I have referred to one of the evils resulting to our country from the falsehood, that democracy may stand by slavery. I, now, add, that the pernicious effects of your proslavery democracy are not confined to this land. Its blight upon human liberty and human hopes is felt in other lands also. By reason of her political theories, her Declaration of Independence and her Constitutions, our country has, long been, the political light-house of the world. The lovers of liberty among all the oppressed and benighted nations have rejoiced in its cheering and guiding beams. But, they can hardly descry it, any longer—so dense are the clouds, which our inconsistencies and hypocrisies, the variance between our lives and our lips, our practices and our professions, have gathered around it. Ah, how much harder blows would our example inspire the oppressed Hungarian and Italian to strike, were our deeds in harmony with our words, and were we honestly and gloriously fulfilling the expectations excited by those brilliant services in the cause of liberty, with which we signalized the beginning of our national existence! Feeble, too, would be the resistance offered by tyrants to the uprisings of their outraged subjects, were it not for the betrayal of liberty by us her chosen guardians, and for the much, which we have done to disparage her claims to the homage of the world.

I tremble for the fate of liberty. Despotism, both civil and ecclesiastical, is marshalling its mighty hosts against her; and such a sham democracy, as you and our other leaders in Church and State are preaching, makes those hosts far mightier, and their opponents far weaker. Liberty may fall—but she would not—oh no, she could not—if, at this crisis, our country should strike the chains from her slaves. In that act of justice and mercy, we should be publishing a true democracy—a true gospel of human rights—whose power would stir the lowest depths of every soul, and double the vigor of every arm enlisted on the side of liberty.

I said, that I will not doubt, that you believe your proslavery democracy to be truth. Nor will I doubt, that you believe the religion, which justifies this democracy, to be the true religion. Nevertheless, may God deliver the world from such a religion. The civil governments of the world are, even the best of them, but conspiracies. They deserve not to be called civil governments. They are, whilst they exist, insuperable obstacles in the way of the enlightenment, blessedness, salvation, of the world—for they all practice some forms or other of grinding and wasting oppression, and rob the masses of rights vital to their well being. These obstacles must be removed—these conspiracies must be displaced by true civil governments, such, as shall protect their subjects in their right to liberty, and in their right to land, and in all their other cardinal rights, ere the truth can have "free course and be glorified"; ere this world will be brought under saving influences, and become a redeemed world. The religion, which chimes in with, and justifies these conspiracies—these spurious civil governments—is, of course, not the religion to thrust them aside, and get better in their places. Satan will not cast out Satan. The religion of those, who vote for anti-abolitionists, and land-monopolists, and rum-sellers, and rum-drinkers (, and such is the religion of nearly every one of the Churches, and of quite every one of the Missionary and Bible Societies, of the nation,) will not fail to be on good terms with the civil governments, which, the world over, are plundering, and outraging, and crushing, humanity.

There is a religion—blessed be God, that there is!—which is able to overturn all these lying and murderous counterfeits of civil government; and which is able to rectify all the disorders of this sin-crazed world. It is the religion, which Jesus Christ brought into it. Its worst enemies have stolen its name;—but they have given abundant evidence, that its spirit and power do not always accompany its name. A great part of the world is filled with one conventional christianity or another, whilst the true christianity, like its author, has scarcely "where to lay its head". For the spread and triumph of this true christianity, many a slave in his chains is praying; and, so also, many an outcast, who is robbed of his home by legalized land-monopoly; and, so also, many a victim of governmental taxes, or some other form of governmental oppression. Their prayers will, yet, be answered. Christianity will yet be in the ascendant:—and when that day shall come, its professed disciples will not say, that, in respect to the soundness of his political faith, it is all one, whether a man be a deliverer of the poor, or a buyer and seller, and whipper, and murderer, of the poor. In that day, professed disciples of christianity will be so enlightened, as to know, when reading in their Bible: "He that ruleth over men must be just"—"The ruler is the minister of God"—that their votes must be for the "just" only, and for such, as will administer their office righteously. How much better is such a political faith than that, which you commend!—than that, which allows its possessor as much liberty to vote for a slaveholder, as for a just man—as much liberty to vote for a servant or minister of the devil, as for a servant or "minister of God!"

Pardon me, dear Sir, the freedom of this letter. We have often taken counsel together on the subject of temperance. Why may we not on the subject of politics also? Very probably, this communication will appear to you to be "a setter forth of strange" doctrines. I wish you knew more of them. You will know more of them, if you will read that valuable newspaper published at Syracuse under the name of "Liberty Party Paper." John Thomas is its worthy and able editor.

Respectfully, your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE CHURCH OF PETERBORO,
At their Meeting held Nov. 27, 1849.

Whereas certain persons, who formerly identified themselves with the Church of Peterboro, and who have latterly stood aloof from it, complain, that the 3d in the series of Resolutions, passed by this Church June 1st, 1849, is so expressed, as to violate the distinctive principle of this Church, *that the christians of a place are the Church of such place:* and whereas, though we see no just grounds for so interpreting said Resolution, we, nevertheless, do see just grounds for greatly respecting the judgment and tenderly regarding the conscience, which, in this instance, differ so widely from our own judgment and conscience: Resolved, therefore, that we, cheerfully and unanimously, rescind the said Resolution, and adopt, in its stead, the following Resolutions.

1st. Resolved, That our bosoms still swell with grief and indignation at the recollection of the great outrage of which they were guilty, who, though not regarding themselves as christians, yet, nevertheless, presumed to come among us and vote on questions affecting the continuance of H. P. Crozier's pastorship.

2d. Resolved, That, whilst we claim, that all the christians of this community have the liberty, and are bound, to attend our church meetings, and take part in all our church business, we nevertheless deny, that this claim gives any license to that christian to do so, who, in the act of doing so, would make war upon his own convictions—upon his conviction, that his own proper place is in a sect, and not in the one indivisible church of Peterboro—or upon his conviction, that they, who love to come under the name of the church of Peterboro, are a mere faction, and the enemies of an authorized church of Jesus Christ—or upon his conviction, that he is not yet ready or willing to identify himself with and participate in the responsibilities of any church.

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PETERBORO, *January* 14 1850.

JOHN COCHRAN,
ISAAC T. HOPPER,
DANIEL C. EATON,
GEORGE H. EVANS,
WILLIAM KEMEYS:

GENTLEMEN,—

I proposed, last Spring, to make gifts to five hundred males and five hundred females, inhabitants of this State. I requested you to select from the City and County of New-York seventy-five of each sex: and I requested persons in the other Counties of our State to select the remaining four hundred and twenty-five of each sex. You kindly and promptly undertook the labor, which I presumed to assign you: and I, now, have the pleasure to receive from you the one hundred and fifty names.

I have come to the conclusion, that it is not best for the females to receive land from me. What land I have left, and my title to which is unquestionable, is, with small exceptions, unfit for farming. My gifts to colored people took all my large tracts of farming land, save one in the County of Franklin:—and this can, perhaps, hardly be called a farming tract. It is of inferior soil; and I cannot say, that it is very valuable in any respect. Notwithstanding some of the lots abound in pine, the tract is too far from market to make it very desirable for its timber. The Boston & Ogdensburgh rail road, however, passes within some 16 or 18 miles of it.

This tract, which contains nearly nineteen thousand acres, and which my deceased father had his surveyor divide into farm-lots, I conclude to give to the five hundred men, each of whom will, as I formerly proposed, receive ten dollars, along with his deed.

The five hundred females will each receive fifty dollars. This sum is sufficient to purchase forty acres of Government land. I hope, that each one, who does not so expend it, will expend it in the purchase of other land. To you, who know my heart on this subject, I need not say, how deeply I feel, that every person needs to be the admitted owner of a parcel of land. This every person should be, without having to pay for it. But, if a free ownership be withheld, still let there be an ownership, whenever it can be bought. If for no other reason than that the more, who are the admitted owners of land, the sooner will such ownership be acknowledged to be a natural, universal, and inalienable right, I would have every person get a parcel of land, who can get it.

Alas, that good men should be so slow to see, that the acknowledged right of every generation, and the whole of every generation, to the use of the earth, as well as to the use of the sea, the light, and the air, is necessarily preliminary to that state of universal comfort, and happiness, and holiness, for which good men labor and pray! So vitally important, so indispensable, is this right in my view, that no person, who rejects it, can get my vote to be a civil ruler, or a moral instructer. How long will the people consent to be put off with bribes and toys and deceptions in the place of the acknowledgment of their rights? The Governments of the earth all refuse to acknowledge the right of the people to the soil. And yet the people, stripped though they are of this greatest right, and of this only effectual security for all their rights, sustain and honor these Governments! And this they do, because their Governments help them pay their parsons or their schoolmasters, or bribe them in some other way. Only let the Governments of the earth give back to their subjects the rights, of which they are robbed; and their subjects will lack neither the ability nor the disposition to take the whole care, and bear the whole burden, of their schools and churches.

I send you herewith 75 deeds of land and $750 for the 75 males you have selected, and $3,750 for the 75 females you have selected. Should the grantees wish to make inquiries respecting the land, I hope they will make them of you. I cannot even read, much less can I answer, all the letters, which I receive.

To the Committees in the other Counties I will send Deeds and ten dollars with each, as fast as I receive from them the names of the males, whom they select. My gifts to the females, whom they select, I shall not be able to complete in a less space of time than a year, or eighteen months, as my first duty with the moneys I receive is to employ a large share of them in continuing to reduce the great amount of debt, which I still owe. It is probable, however, that I shall, every month, pay the females of one or more Counties.

With great regard,
your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

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ANTI-FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW MEETING.

At a large Meeting of persons from various parts of the State of New York, held in the City of Syracuse January 9th 1851, and of which FREDERICK DOUGLASS was President, the following Resolutions and Address were unanimously adopted. The Address is the same, and, with an inconsiderable exception, the Resolutions are the same, as those, which were reported by GERRIT SMITH to the State Convention held in said City, January 7th, 8th, 9th, 1851:

RESOLUTIONS.

1st. Resolved, that we pour out upon the Fugitive Slave Law the fullest measure of our contempt and hate and execration; and pledge ourselves to resist it actively, as well as passively, and by all such means, as shall, in our esteem, promise the most effectual resistance.

2d. Resolved, that they, who consent to be the agents of Southern oppressors for executing this law, whether as Commissioners, or Marshals, or in any other capacity, are to be regarded as kidnappers and land-pirates.

3d. Resolved, that it is our duty to peril life, liberty, and property, in behalf of the fugitive slave, to as great an extent, as we would peril them in behalf of ourselves.

4th. Resolved, that obviously and grossly Unconstitutional as is this Law, nevertheless this is not the chief reason why we condemn and defy it:—for equally, whether they are Constitutional or Unconstitutional, do we condemn and defy all laws, which insult Him, who is above all Constitutions, and which, aiming not to protect, but to destroy, rights, are, therefore, to be regarded as no laws.

5th. Resolved, that, horrible as is this law, we must bear in mind, that it is but a perfectly natural and not at all to be wondered at exaction of slavery: and that, hence, our first and great work is to get rid, not of the law, but of slavery—as it would be our first and great work to pursue and kill the mad-dog, instead of pausing, until we had effected the cure of one of his bites.

6th. Resolved, that between corrupt politics on the one hand and corrupt churches on the other—between the politicians and parties, who enacted this Law, and the priests, who are preaching its enforcement—there is no hope for this Nation, unless it shall very speedily be brought to prefer honesty to knavery, both in its religious teachers and civil rulers.

7th. Resolved, that, were the current religion of the country to be exchanged for blank infidelity, the abolition of slavery would be comparatively easy.

8th. Resolved, that when the immortal writer of the Declaration of Independence said: "If we do not liberate the enslaved by the generous energy of our own minds, they must, they will, be liberated by the awful process" of St. Domingo Emancipation, he uttered words, which there is but too much reason to believe are rapidly approaching their fulfilment.

9th. Resolved, that, inasmuch as sound principles and sound teachers are as indispensable in our Institutions of Learning, as in our pulpits, we rejoice to know, that, under the progress of the antislavery sentiment, there are already several Colleges in our country, which are open to colored students; and that there are two of these, in which colored students find themselves emphatically at home. These are Oberlin College in Ohio, and Central College in New York—in the latter of which there is a colored Professor.

10th. Resolved, that, inasmuch as every National party in this Nation must, because it is a National party, spare, if not indeed, positively favor, slavery, it follows, that whoever belongs to the Whig or Democratic party, or to any ecclesiastical National party, does, however unwillingly or unwittingly, give his influence and support to slavery.

11th. Resolved, that the time has come, and had long ago come, for gathering a Northern political party, which shall be both determined and able to carry out the principles of the Federal Constitution and the principles of humanity and religion, in overthrowing the base and bloody system of American slavery, and in establishing a righteous Civil Government.

12th. Resolved, that we welcome the presence in this Convention of William L. Chaplin; and render thanks to Almighty God for having preserved him alive, whilst under the blows and threats of murderous ruffians, and whilst in the dreary prisons, to which villainous and piratical Governments had committed him.

13th. Resolved, that, instead of rebuking and scorning, we honor and love, this dear brother for having done that for which Jesus Christ will say unto him before an assembled world: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me".

14th. Resolved, that if William L. Chaplin has done violence to the principles of republicanism and christianity, in suffering a couple of his fellow-men to seek to promote their escape from slavery by getting into his carriage, then are republicanism and christianity the deadliest enemies of humanity, and the cruellest lies, that h[illegible]ed.

1[illegible]ithstanding the considerable amount of donations toward effecting the liberation of our br[illegible]obliged, by reason of the exorbitant bail required of him, to borrow large sums of mo[illegible]idual[illegible], Resolved, therefore, that we deeply sympathize with him under his pecuniar[illegible]d warmly desire, that the benevolent may soon relieve him of them.

16[illegible]he liberation of Chaplin is an occasion for remembering afresh, and pitying afresh, Drayto[illegible] calling afresh on this hypocritical and cruel Nation to set these outraged and afflicte[illegible]

17[illegible]ch as the imprisonment of Drayton and Sayre for aiding their fellow men to escape from the horrors of slavery, is an imprisonment for what not only humanity and religion pronounce a virtue; but for what the law of the Declaration of Independence, since it declares "that all men are created

equal", pronounces a virtue; and for what the law of the Federal Constitution, since it declares its object to be "to establish justice and secure the blessings of liberty," does, also, pronounce a virtue; Resolved, therefore, that it would be, not a lawless act, but a lawful, as well as humane and religious act, to demolish the prison of these philanthropists, and let them go free.

ADDRESS.

To the People of the State of New York:

A recent law of Congress calls on you to assist in reducing your fellow men to slavery. Were these fellow men criminals, slavery would be a punishment beyond, and infinitely beyond, their deserts. To subject a man to the most capricious, cruel, and irresponsible despotism—a despotism too, which absolutely annihilates all his rights, and makes him from manhood to chattelhood—is more than is due to even the greatest crimes. But these fellow men are not criminals. They are your peaceable, guiltless, humble neighbors. And they are not insensible to the wrongs inflicted upon them. They have interests and sensibilities like your own. They love wife and children, even as you do. As susceptible, as yourselves, are they of joy and sorrow. As sweet to them, as to you, is liberty. And when bereaved of this precious blessing, their desolation and wretchedness are as perfect, as would be your own, under the like bereavement.

Why then, if these things are so, should you do the great wrong of reducing these innocent people to slavery? The answer to this inquiry is, that law commands it. We admit our reverence and love for law, and our obligation to obey it. We say with the Apostle, that "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good." But, then, all is not law, which is called law. That, which lacks truth, and justice, and all the elements of law, is, at the most, but nominal law. Genuine and real law is for the protection of rights. It is sham law, and no law, which is for the destruction of rights. But slavery dissolves the whole field of human rights. It leaves not one right to its victims. Hence, every law in favor of slavery is, most emphatically, sham law—is, most emphatically, no law.

But, it is said, that the law in question must be obeyed, because it is a Constitutional law, and because the Constitution called for the law. We see nothing, however, to justify the enactment of this law in that provision of the Constitution, which the law was enacted to enforce. If that provision calls for any legislation, it is, most certainly, State, and not National, legislation. But were, it so, that it calls for National legislation, it would, of course, be such, as does no violence, and attempts no violence, to the provision of the Constitution, respecting the Writ of Habeas Corpus, or to that respecting the right of trial by jury, or to any other of its provisions. Again—this law was enacted for the sole purpose of reducing into slavery those, who had fled from its horrors. But by no fair construction of language can this provision be said to refer to fugitives from slavery. It is said, however, that, notwithstanding the Constitution is, upon its surface, and in its obvious meaning, a paper *against* slavery, there is, nevertheless, in this and in some other of its provisions, a hidden meaning *for* slavery. To this we reply, that it is quite license enough to pass from an obvious to an occult meaning of words—from the cart its legal meaning of words to some one of the ten thousand of their uncertain historical and traditional meanings—even when this is done for the furtherance of the cause of justice:—but, that to do this for the purpose of gaining success for injustice and villainy, and injustice and villainy of unsurpassed enormity, is to go very far beyond the limits of endurance.

What, however, if this law were in harmony with the Constitution?—that would be no authority for the law, if the law is contrary to truth. Constitutions and laws, so far as they are repugnant to truth, are void. If the great Apostle had to confess, that he could "do nothing against the truth, but for the truth", the like confession must be made for Constitutions and laws. They are powerless against the everlasting bulwarks of reason and religion.

Because it is the sacred work of our fathers is another of the reasons assigned, why we must obey the Constitution and every part of it. Our brief, only, and sufficient, answer to this is, that whatever respect we owe to our dead fathers, we owe more to the living God.

We are told, too, that, if we reject the Constitution, or any part of it, we cannot consistently, and cannot, of right, vote under it:—and that, hence, we must cling to it, and to every part of it, in order to save to ourselves the precious and important right of suffrage—the precious and important right of participating in the choice of our civil rulers. In answer to this we declare, that it is a very gross and a very pernicious fallacy, that our right to vote is created by, and held under, the Constitution. Our right to select our civil rulers comes from God; inheres in our social being; and overrides all Constitutions and enactments. It is true, that men are at liberty to provide their conventional regulations for the exercise of this right:—but they cannot create the right, or take it away, or at all encroach upon it. Hence, the provision of the Federal Constitution, which makes the taking of a certain oath the condition of the chosen ruler's entering upon the duties of his office, should be repealed, because it is in derogation of the natural and absolute right of the people to choose their rulers. Hence, too, they are wrong, manifestly wrong, who, because of this required oath, relinquish, or hold in abeyance, this natural and absolute right. They should persevere in the exercise of it, as did the constituents of Daniel O'Connell: and if any, whom they wish to make rulers, shall have conscience against taking the oath of office, they should, nevertheless, select them. Their perseverance would be as successful, as was the perseverance of O'Connell's constituents. The oath would be waived, when refused; or, better still, it would be withdrawn from the Constitution.

But, in answer to all our reasons for not obeying this law for making slaves of our neighbors, we are told, that we must obey it for the reason, that Civil Government must be obeyed. It is true, that Civil Government must be obeyed. But, the command to obey it comes to us with the limitation, which accompanies the command to obey our parents. If we must obey our parents, only "in the Lord"—that is, only to the extent, that their commands harmonize with the Divine commands—so must we obey Civil Government with the like qualification. Civil Government is, to the same extent, that every person is, subject to the supreme and immutable laws of God; and wherever it violates those laws, it is entitled to no authority or obedience.

The doctrine, that wrong may be done, if commanded by Civil Government, is utterly fallacious. It is a doctrine which found no favor with the young Hebrews, who preferred the fiery furnace to obeying a sinful command of the Government. Nor did it find any favor with him, who had rather be cast into the lion's den than comply with a wicked requirement of the Government. The Apostles, too, refused to obey such a requirement: and they based their refusal expressly on the ground of the paramount authority of God.

We are admonished to obey this law, as we would escape the crime, and the peril, of rebellion. But, when the Civil Government tramples on the Divine authority, it is its Civil Government, which is the rebel—and not the citizen, who refuses to follow it. The Government, which has enacted this diabolical law, has involved itself in the deepest and guiltiest rebellion—rebellion against Jehovah Himself. But the citizen, who refuses to bear a part in enforcing it, keeps himself clear of the sin of rebellion.

We are summoned, in the name of patriotism, to obey this law. But this law, being treason to God and man, we cannot serve our country by obeying it. "*Righteousness* exalteth a nation"—and whensoever we shall be invoked by a true patriotism, it will be to a course of righteousness. It will invoke us to honor, and not to insult, God; to stand by, and not to oppress, His poor.

We are told, that we are not at liberty to decide for ourselves what is Constitutional, and lawful; and the further falsehood is added, that the Constitution appoints the Judges under it its sole expounders. We are, also, told, to listen submissively to what eminent clergymen pronounce to be the ethics in this case. But, whilst we accept the papal doctrine, which would bind our conscience by other men's interpretations of religion, we hold in no higher esteem the equally lying doctrine, which denies our right to judge for ourselves what is Constitutional and lawful.

We see, then, that no plea of respect for law, or for Civil Government, or for the Constitution, or for any of its expounders, or for any of the expounders of Christianity, and that no threats of the stigma or punishment of rebellion, and no appeals in the name of patriotism, should be allowed to have the effect to bring us to the side of this infernal and horrible law. Come these pleas, and threats, and appeals, from the Meetings, which commercial and political men are getting up all over the North, under the name of "Union Meetings"; or come they from the mercenaries and knaves, who have got possession of so large a share of the American pulpits; we are to be deaf to them all.

The way is, now, prepared for us to say, that we will resist this law:—will resist it, at all hazards of property, or liberty, or life—and by all such means, as shall promise to him, who uses them, the most effectual resistance. We cannot be christians, we cannot be men, we do otherwise. He is no christian, and he has sunk his manhood out of sight, who can join in the attempt to reduce his innocent neighbor and brother to slavery; or who can witness such attempt, without striving to defend it. This is not extravagant language in European ears; and if it is such in American ears, it is only because slavery has subsidized the American press and pulpit, and benighted, infatuated, and debauched, the American people. It is manifest, that, wherever slavery reigns, there must be a very imperfect perception of the claims of humanity and religion.

Fellow citizens! we stop not with exhorting you to trample this law under foot. This law is one, and but one, of the demands of American slavery upon you:—and, as long as American slavery lives, it will, ever and anon, be putting forth demands upon you—demands, all of which will be deeply revolting to an enlightened conscience and a sound humanity. Your war with this law is, therefore, not to be limited to this law:—but it is to be extended to slavery itself. For, until slavery is overthrown, you will be constantly exposed to its tyrannous and galling claims. For, your own sake, then, you have need to strike at slavery. But, if so, how much more should you strike at it, for the slave's sake! If you, who are amid but the outer and feebler reaches of the power of slavery, are, nevertheless, so impatient under that power, what must not be the agony of those, who are in the very centre of its iron grasp? If you, who are in but the penumbra of slavery, complain so much of its chilling shadows, how horrid must be their condition, who are in the blackness of its darkness! Oh, to be a slave! To wake, every morning, with the consciousness of being a slave. To carry the weary load of this consciousness, all the day long! Surely, surely, earth has no other lot, so hard as that of the slave!

Does slavery, then, concern you for yourselves? How much more should it concern you for the millions of your enslaved countrymen. Is it your duty to deliver yourselves from its toils? Infinitely higher is your duty to free the slave. What hinders you from giving this help? Say you, that the Constitution does? We admit, that, in most of the interpretations of that instrument, there is an abundance of proslavery. But, we affirm, that, in the instrument itself, there is none. We admit, that proslavery is to be found in

[illegible] the [illegible], and uncertain histories of the instrument. But, we affirm, that, for the purpose of interpreting it, we have nothing to do with these histories; and that we are to determine its character and claims from its text, and not from its histories. We admit, that there is some historical evidence, that certain parties had the purpose to get slavery into the Constitution. But, the question is—did they get it in? Their purpose is nothing, if it was not successful.

What, however, if the Constitution, instead of requiring, as it clearly does, the immediate extinction of slavery, requires it to be upheld!—vain, altogether vain, is such requirement against the obligations, which flow from the natural and unchangeable relations of men to each other. These relations, being before and above any relations created by the Constitution, must be sustained and honored, even though all artificial and conventional relations do thereby perish.

Is it said, that we are not to interfere with the institutions of our sister States?—and that slavery in Virginia or Georgia is beyond our legitimate reach? We answer, that, wherever in our own Nation, or in any other Nation, the rights of men are cloven down, there is a work for us to do, in behalf of our common humanity. Neither by State, nor National lines are our sympathies to be bounded:—and, wherever our sympathies are called for, thither should we go in person, if that be needful to make our sympathies most effective. It is a Nation of men, instead of the truth of God, that we have not the right to help each of the oppressed, as well beyond the limits of our State, or Nation. The same right have we to fly to the succor of the oppressed Italian or Hungarian, as to relieve the wrongs of our countrymen and neighbors. It is tyrants, who are not willing to be disturbed in their oppression of their subjects;—it is these, who have instilled into the well nigh universal mind the lesson, that a man has no right to carry his philanthropic efforts beyond his own country. But that lesson is scorned, wherever the doctrine of the human brotherhood is intelligently and lovingly apprehended. Draw as many lines upon the surface of the earth, and in the as many Nations, as you will, this can, in no wise, abject the rights, which pertain to membership in the human family. There is woman fully the rights of the Samaritan, when in Judea, as when in Samaria;—and, hence, the liberty to minister to human want, as well in the one Nation, as in the other. These rights are unimpaired in the beloved Joseph Sturge and Elihu Burritt;—and, hence, their liberty to go among the contending powers of Europe for the purpose of making peace. They are unimpaired in the eloquent and excellent George Thompson also;—and, hence, he may come to the shores of America to plead the cause of the down-trodden. It is true, that Sturge and Burritt are not Danes, and that Thompson is not an American. But, Sturge and Burritt are brothers of Danes and Thompson is the brother of Americans! and, surely, one brother has the right to help another, meet they, where they may, in the wide world.

Deny our right to deliver the millions of our countrymen, who are crushed in the iron folds of slavery! Why, if wherever a nominal christianity prevails (and the prevailing christianity of no nation is more than nominal,) there were a real christianity, then would it be acknowledged, over all Christendom, that, to break up the nest of pirates in our Southern States, and to break up every other nest of pirates, is the first work of Christianity, and a work to which no State nor National boundaries should be suffered to present any impediments.

We presume not, fellow citizens, to prescribe what you shall do for the overthrow of American slavery. It is for you to determine, as you are able to do wisely, by what means you shall undertake to compass this object. But, we cannot close this Address, without reminding you, that, in vain will be all your efforts to this end, whilst you are identified with American religion or American politics. These are the great props of American slavery. America boasts of her republicanism and also of her religion. But, there is not in the wide world another such compound of hypocrisy, meanness, and cruelty, as is to be seen in her republicanism, and, also, in her religion. We mean by American religion, that religion, which our National ecclesiastical parties have gotten up for the purpose of accommodating the man-thieves of the South and their guilty partners in the North—that religion, which, only the other day, shut out men from an Episcopal Convention for no other reason than the color of their skins—that religion, whose cunning, calculating ministers from one end of your State to the other—from the Spencers of Brooklyn to the Lords of Buffalo—are preaching obedience to the law, which calls on you to sink your fellow men into the Hell of slavery. We mean by American politics that mixture, which our National political parties have skilfully adapted to the palates of the dealers in human flesh at the South, and to the palates of the dealers in Southern cotton at the North, and to the palates of office-seekers, both North and South. We mean by American politics the Whig and Democratic politics, which enacted that law, under the terrors of which "the poor of the earth hide themselves together", or fly affrighted to the wilds and snows of Canada; and under the power of which parents, children, husbands, wives, are dragged down into the matchless horrors of slavery. We mean by American politics the politics, which crowd the numberless "Union Meetings" of the North with Whig and Democratic traitors to Freedom and to God. We mean by American politics the politics, which have, so recently and so suddenly, led the Whig and Democratic parties, both in and out of Congress, to adopt the hush-policy in regard to slavery. Many of their Newspapers have, ere now, uttered brave words against slavery;—but even these have nearly all found themselves obliged to come into this hush-policy.

We scarcely need add, that the base, haggard, murderous creatures, which we have declared American politics and American religion to be, must, necessarily, so long as slavery is the ruling interest of the Nation, be the politics and the religion—the one of our National political parties, and the other of our National ecclesiastical parties. For, it is manifest, that the South, so long as she is under the sway of slavery, will come into no party—will abide in no party, whether in Church or State—that does not conform to the demands of slavery. Whatever, then, you shall, or shall not, undertake to do for the overthrow of American slavery, it is obvious, as we have virtually said before, that you can do nothing effectual to this end, only in so far, as you are extricated from the meshes of National parties, both political and ecclesiastical. To be in any such parties is to be, whether you know it or not, and whether you will it or not, on the side of slavery.

We take pleasure in admitting, that there are many persons in the Whig and Democratic parties, who cherish a sincere desire for the abolition of slavery, and who make more or less effort to this end. But, it is manifest, that the antislavery influence of such desire and effort is as nothing, compared with the proslavery influence, which they exert in sustaining a mighty proslavery party. Surely, surely, if an individual would maintain his power at any point, he must not join and sustain a party, which is exerting a counter power at that point.

So, too, do we take pleasure in admitting, that there are many persons in the Whig and Democratic parties, who cherish a sincere desire for the repeal or nullification of the Fugitive slave law, and who make more or less effort to this end. But preeminently absurd is the idea, that they are in effect, as well as in desire and effort, against this law. For, not only is it true, that these parties are desperately proslavery, and, from the fact of their being National parties, necessarily proslavery; but it is also true, that this law has become the great bond of union in the case of each of these parties, and that each of them is to be kept from dissolution, only so long as this law is unrepealed and enforced. If he then, who adheres to a party, which is held together by the continuance and cement of this satanic law, may be honest in believing, that the weight of his influence can be against the law, he is, nevertheless, foolish in entertaining such a belief. The Whig and Democratic parties made the law. The Whig and Democratic parties uphold the law. The Whig and Democratic parties must, on penalty of being broken up, continue to uphold the law. Nothing, then, is more plain than that the first work of him, who is in one of these parties, and who would contribute to put an end to this law, is to break out of his party, and to cease to vote for slaveholders, and for the makers, and defenders, and keepers, of slave-catching and slave-holding laws. Do what else he will, he is, until he does this, *for* the law. Until he does this, he is to be held responsible for this murderous law, instead of being fellowshipped by its consistent and effective enemies. His first work is his own repentance, instead of bringing others to repentance:—and for us to admit, that he can espouse our cause, and stand by our side, without having done this first work, is for us to cheapen, and disgrace, and condemn ourselves, our position, and our cause.

Weight—

This Nation is perishing, because of its National parties: and whoever would contribute to save it must stand aloof from them. The most reasonable hope, that the Free Soil party, which was organized in this State, two or three years ago, would prove useful, was grounded in the fact, that it was not a National party. And it might, possibly, have proved useful in some respects, had it continued to be a Northern party. But, the looves and fishes are to be found in National parties: and as it was these, more than the success of the antislavery cause, that the majority of its leaders were after, it is no mystery, that this party has, with honorable exceptions among its members, identified itself with a National party. Free Soil parties were organized, about that time, in several other States. But little or no good will come from them, notwithstanding, that many noble men are in them. These parties refuse to be concerned for the three millions of slaves in the States:—and, in respect to fugitive slaves, the highest ground, which even their Mr. Giddings takes, in his late Free Soil Speech, is, that, whilst they will not *hinder* the fiend-work of repulging them into slavery, they will not *help* it. It is, nevertheless, by means of such parties, that these good men expect to accomplish good. Also, when will even good men give up their atheistic contrivances for doing good? Why should they hope for success in a policy, which is counter to the Divine policy? God's is the positive and glorious policy of doing good. Theirs is the negative and miserable policy of doing no harm. He denounces not him only, who makes the poor cry, but him also, who "stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor". He denounces not him only, who draws his fellow men unto death, but him also who "forbears to deliver them, that are drawn unto death". The Free Soil parties flatter themselves, that God denounces but the slave-holder. No less, however, does He denounce them, who suffer the slave to be held. The Free Soil parties flatter themselves, that God denounces but the slave-catcher. But, no less certain and fearful are His denunciations against them, who suffer the slave to be caught.

The excuse of these Free Soil parties, for keeping themselves within this circle of negations, is that the Federal Constitution keeps them them. Unhappy reading of the Constitution is theirs! But, what if the Constitution is, as they read it? What, in that case, have they to do, but to break away from it, as they should from every "covenant with death and agreement with Hell"? None of us are absolutely bound to be Constitutionalists. But all of us are absolutely bound to be men. If we cannot be Constitutionalists, and yet be men; then we cannot be Constitutionalists. If we cannot follow the Constitution without forsaking our manhood, then we cannot follow the Constitution. If to claim, that God has made us keepers of all our brothers—of our brother, who is pining in slavery, and of our brother, who is escaping from it—is to disobey the Constitution, then we must disobey it.

Happy, thrice happy, would it be, were the good men of the land to constitute a political party, which should be intent on realizing the idea of a righteous Civil Government—a Government, which would sympathize with the slave, and the landless, and protect its subjects from the curse of war, and the curse of the traffic in intoxicating drinks. How soon such a party would rid the country of slavery, and land-monopoly, and rum-selling, and save the earnings of its laborers from being wasted on war and the preparations for war! But, so it is, that the good men of the land do, with few exceptions, belong to the National political parties—and these are pro-slavery, land-monopoly, war, and rum-selling parties! What infatuation in such men to belong to such parties! And what infatuation would it be in us to hope for the advancement of our country in the cause of truth and virtue and religion, whilst the great mass

of her good men are found in such wicked and pernicious connexions! Make up your minds, fellow citizens, that your country must perish, unless the good men in it hasten to quit the National, and, because National, proslavery parties. We beg you not to misunderstand us, at this point. We do not hold, that Civil Government, however perfect in its theory, or in its administration, is the source of salvation. Religion alone has this honor;—and Civil Government is but her servant. She will, however, undertake no contradictions. She will not seek to save the world by means and agencies hostile to its salvation. She will not employ to this end war, instead of peace; drunkenness, instead of temperance; licentiousness, instead of purity; nor unrighteous Civil Government, unrighteous civil rulers, and unrighteous political parties, instead of their opposites.

Our last words are to the colored people of the State of New-York; and, in speaking to them, we speak to the colored people of all the Northern States also. Brethren! we need your help to overthrow the bloody and satanic system of American slavery. We cannot dispense with it. Much less can we afford to have you an obstacle in our way. So it is, however, that you have, hitherto, been such an obstacle. The Colonization Society, which you hate with a great, but not too great, hatred, proposes to remove you to Africa. Your reply to this proposal is, that you must remain here to sympathize with your enslaved brethren, and help deliver them. Pardon us for saying, that you wholly mistake the effect of your presence. Were you removed from the land, the work of delivering the slave would not be half as difficult, as it now is. You are the mill-stone around his neck. It is true, that, were your conduct and character what they should be, the effect of your presence would be most favorable to the slave. Indeed, he could not, in that case, remain a slave.

What is most needful for the deliverance of the enslaved is, that their oppressors shall see them to be men. If they shall see these, where they abuse and trample under foot, to be men—Heaven-endowed, immortal men—the sight will render them morally incapable of continuing their guilty relation. They will fly back from that relation, horror-struck at the revelation of its enormities. But, how, by any other means, could they be brought so effectually to see the manhood and dignity of their slaves, as in the light of your conduct and character, were but that conduct and character what they should be, for self-denial, purity, beauty, and elevation? Nothing is more true than that that part of the race, which is out of slavery, reflects the advantage, or, disadvantage, of its character—of its excellence or debasement—upon that part of the race, which is still in slavery. An instance of this truth is in the slaveholders' habit of justifying their enslavement of your brethren by the standing and plausible, and greatly influential, plea of your degradation—of your unfitness for freedom.

You admit your degradation:—but you seek to excuse it on the ground, that it is forced—that it is involuntary. An involuntary degradation! We are half disposed to deny its possibility; and to treat the language as a solecism. At any rate, we feel comparatively no concern for what of your degradation comes from the hands of others. It is your *self-degradation*, which fills us with sorrow—sorrow for yourselves, and still more for the millions, whose fate turns so largely on your bearing. We know, and it grieves us to know, that white men are your murderers. But, our far deeper grief is, that you are suicides.

Would to God, brethren, that you were inspired with self-respect! Then would others be inspired with respect for you:—and, then, would the days of American slavery be numbered. We entreat you to rise up, and to quit yourselves like men, in all your political, and ecclesiastical, and social, relations. As instances of your lack of self-respect—many of you consent to worship in Churches, which have the negro-pew; and many of you are in connexion with proslavery ecclesiastical bodies, and have Church-fellowship with those, who buy and sell your brethren, and who, of course, have no moral principle against buying and selling you; and many of you belong to the same political parties with the slaveholders, and the upholders of slavery, and the upholders of the "Fugitive slave law"; and, so entirely prostrate is your self-respect, that you go to the polls, and vote for men, who refuse to eat with you—to sit by your side in the House of Worship—or let their children sit by the side of yours in the School, and who would kick you out of their parlors, were you to presume to enter them. Say we not truly, brethren, that you are the heaviest burden, which the antislavery cause has to carry? Indeed, compared with this, all its other burdens are light.

Perhaps, it will be said, in excuse for your abjectness and self-contempt, that, so long as you are clustered in cities and villages, and confined to servile employments, your spirit must, necessarily, be servile, your votes at the disposal of your employers, and your religion whatever is most convenient. Why, then, do you not scatter yourselves over the country in the capacity of independent and upright farmers and mechanics?

All truly good men do, of course, sympathize with you. You are oppressed—deeply, cruelly, wickedly, oppressed;—and that is reason enough, why they should sympathize with you. Nevertheless, great injustice is done to Daniel Webster, Lewis Cass, and others, when they are taxed with inconsistency for passing over you, and giving their sympathies to the Hungarians. Daniel Webster and Lewis Cass and the like belong to the vulgar herd of men:—and when has that vulgar herd been known to sympathize with a people, simply because they were oppressed? Never! never! There must be heart, where there is such sympathy. But all men, including even such selfish and prostituted persons, as Daniel Webster and Lewis Cass, are capable of sympathizing with the brave, self-denying, and heroic endeavors, which, here and there, the oppressed put forth to throw off their oppressions. Hence, the interest of Daniel Webster, Lewis Cass, and the like, in the Hungarians, whilst, at the same time, they forget others, who are more heavily oppressed, but who, nevertheless, instead of arousing themselves, like the Hungarians, to put an end to their oppressions, have sunk down tamely, and servilely, and helplessly, under them.

Let the colored people of the North display bravery, and self-sacrifice, and heroism, in their own behalf, and in behalf of their brethren in bonds:—let them be seen "in every city to gather themselves together and to stand for their life", as did the handful of oppressed Jews in the reign of King Ahasuerus; and let them be seen resolved to perish rather than return to slavery; or let them be seen sternly refusing to consume the products, which are heavy with the groans and wet with the sweat, and tears, and blood, of the slave; or let them be seen as sternly refusing to worship with the devil-worshippers, who build negro-pews; or as sternly refusing to go into political parties, in which slaveholders feel at home, and to vote for their oppressors, traducers, and despisers:—let such things, we say, be seen in the colored people of the North, and it requires no spirit of prophecy to foretell, that such things will have power to enlist the sympathies, and extort the praise and admiration of all men. Even Daniel Webster and Lewis Cass, now negro-murderers, will then be negro-admirers. Then Daniel S. Dickinson, exchanging for a genuine reverence the spirit in him, which *he* deems to be a reverent, but which is only a spaniel and servile spirit, will desire to be carried back to Old Virginia, no longer for the purpose of kissing the feet of her slaveholding patriarchs, but for the purpose of honoring her black men. And, then, even the slaveholders, throwing away their whips and branding-irons, will join the abolitionists.

Brethren, we are not unmindful, that, in speaking to you, and of you, as we have done, we have spoken plainly and freely. But, we have spoken honestly and truly. We admit, and we take pleasure in admitting, that what we have spoken does not apply to you all. There are among you men, who would sooner lay down their lives than join a proslavery Church, or a proslavery political party. These are men of self-respect and self-denial—men of the heroic and the martyr-spirit. May God multiply such, and make them an effectual leaven in the mass of their servile and self-degraded brethren.

In conclusion, we disclaim the idea, that your character has suffered more from your unfavorable circumstances than the character of white men would have suffered from the like circumstances. Had white men been under as protracted and severe a process of debasement, as you have been, there would, doubtless, be quite as much to lament in their condition and character, as there is in yours. But, let it not soothe and content you to know, that you differ from your white brethren, not in your origin and nature, but only in your circumstances; and that to your circumstances, and not to your origin and nature, is your lack of dignity and self-esteem attributable. Feel, deeply feel, that you have fallen;—and that, whatever the causes or explanations of your fall, you will rise. Feel, deeply feel, that, cost what it may, you will be what you should be.

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SPEECH OF GERRIT SMITH,

Made in the National Liberty Party Convention at Buffalo, September 17th, 1851,

when the following Resolutions were under discussion:

1. Resolved, That righteous civil government is an indispensable agency for blessing and saving the world; and that every political party which does not identify itself, openly and heartily, with such government, is unworthy of confidence and support.

2. Resolved, That righteous civil government is impartial towards all its subjects, and redresses all the wrongs within its reach; and that, hence, it disowns the policy of removing one evil and neglecting another, and of doing justice to one portion of its subjects and leaving another to groan under injustice; and that, more emphatically, it disowns the policy of removing one evil by means which confirm and perpetuate other evils, and of benefitting one class of its subjects at the expense of sacrificing another.

We all believe in christianity: and we all believe, that she only can reform, and save, and bless this sin-crazed and sin-ruined world. But christianity though she is, she, nevertheless, cannot work without tools. Christianity though she is, she, nevertheless, constitutes no exception to the universal law, that, wherever there is work to be done, there must be tools to do it with. Moreover, in her case, as in every other case, the tools must be adapted to the work. If we could be warranted in supposing it possible for christianity to use wrong tools, we should be warranted in saying, that, in using them, she would do more harm than good.

Even christianity cannot accomplish impossibilities. She cannot make progress by impeding her progress. What, however, impedes her progress so much, as unrighteous civil government?—unrighteous civil government, which, by means of the oppressions, that it tolerates, and the oppressions, that it practices, dwarfs the intellect, and stupefies and shrivels the soul, of the wronged and robbed and crushed masses; and which nourishes in the privileged classes the spirit of caste and the whole group of selfish and haughty affections?—and which, thus, unfits all, both the high and the low—the high, because of their pride, and the low, because of their abjectness—for receiving christianity? It is a mistake, that christianity is adapted to all classes and conditions; and that she can prosper among slaves and among slaveholders. She can prosper among neither. It is true, that, among both, she may, here and there, make a convert. But we repeat, that she can prosper among neither. Her home and the theatre of her triumphs are among neither the rich nor the poor, the oppressors nor the oppressed. The circumstances preferred by Agur, equally removed, as they are, from the pride of wealth on the one hand, and from the abject dependence of poverty on the other—these are the circumstances, in which christianity has "free course and is glorified." But it is the very opposite of these circumstances, which the unjust and spurious civil governments of the earth produce. Such governments make the rich richer, and the poor poorer; the high higher, and the low lower. Bless a nation, however, with a righteous government—with a government, which will maintain impartially all rights for all; and its happy subjects will, in general, be the equals of each other in wealth, and intellect, and education, and goodness.

We said, that christianity must have suitable tools to work with. Poor tool, however, must unjust and spurious civil government be for her hands and her work! Nevertheless, that tool, poor as it is, is commended by the great mass of her professed disciples;—for they do themselves use it, and they steadfastly refuse to discard it, and to use righteous civil government in its stead.

I take the position, that this will never be a blest and saved world, until christians shall make use of righteous civil government. It is not enough, that they shall refrain from upholding unrighteous civil government. They must uphold righteous civil government. Mr. Garrison and his party do well in refusing to vote for unjust men. But they will not have done their whole duty, until they shall have added to this negative merit the positive merit of voting for just men. Many, because of the corruptions of civil government, when in the hands of unworthy administrators, have resolved to abandon civil government altogether. But this is as absurd, as to resolve to have nothing to do with apples, because some apples are rotten; nothing to do with notes and bills, because some notes and bills are counterfeit.

I do not forget, that Mr Garrison and his party justify non-voting on the ground, that the Federal Constitution [illegible] Can pray, what has the Constitution, whether proslavery, as they think it, or an[illegible] do with the right to vote? The Constitution does not create the right. It is a [illegible] all human authority. It is true, that there may be human laws to regulate [illegible] right; but the right itself is derived from a Power infinitely above human laws. If our [illegible] to choose civil rulers, it is our privilege, our right, our duty, to assemble and participat[illegible] as well when statutes and constitutions are bad, as when they are good. Is it [illegible] required to take an oath of office, in the taking of which they must dishonor and [illegible] that we will see to it, that the men, for whom we vote, are men, who, D[illegible] refuse such an oath; and who, also, Daniel O'Connell like, will, nevertheless, insist [illegible]

[illegible] to civil government—but enough to have nothing to do with civil [illegible] which is bad. Civil government must be used, not [illegible] legitimate purposes and for [illegible] as none, not ev[illegible]

I said, that government must be used. Let not this remark occasion misapprehensions of my views of the province of government. I claim not for it a wide province. I claim not, that it shall build roads and canals for the people, or promote their schools and churches. I claim for it, in a word, nothing else than the right to protect its subjects—and not even this, except wherein they cannot protect themselves.

What a monster of iniquity is civil government in its present perverted and spurious character!—and what an insurmountable obstacle in the way of christianizing and blessing the world! I call it insurmountable, not because it cannot be removed—for there is no obstacle in the way of christianity, which she cannot remove. But I call it insurmountable, because it must be removed, ere she can prevail The actual government, of which I have been speaking, deserves not the name of civil government. It is a conspiracy rather. The world over, a conspiracy against human rights has usurped the name, and installed itself in the place, of civil government:—and, alas, that christians, the world over, should be countenancing and sustaining such a conspiracy!

We will glance at a few of the wrongs and outrages practised by this lying counterfeit of civil government.

1st. It divides the people into classes—exalting some, and depressing others. In our own country, it goes so far in oppression and devilism, as to hold millions in slavery.

2d. It protects the few in plundering the many of the soil—and, this too, notwithstanding the right to the soil is as natural, universal, and equal, as the right to the light and the air. In some countries, as, for instance, in our own, government is itself the great land-monopolist, and withholds from, or sells to, the people what is the people's own. I would here add, that, so long as land-monopoly prevails, the masses will, because robbed of their land, be poor; and so poor, that "poverty's unconquerable bar" will be interposed between them and the intelligence, comfort, and happiness, which are their due, and without which life itself is no blessing.

3d. Notwithstanding the right to buy and sell freely is a great and absolute right, government does, nevertheless, by means of its unnatural tariffs, invade and annihilate it.

4th. Government permits men to traffic in intoxicating drinks, and, thus, to manufacture paupers and madmen—paupers, who burden, beyond endurance, the industry of the sober, and madmen innumerable, who revel in burnings and murders.

5th. By means of its wars, its standing armies and navies, and its fortifications, government impoverishes, and demoralizes, and wastes its subjects.

6th. Government compels one generation to pay the debts of another, and fastens upon the innocent men of the present day the mountain debts, which were wickedly contracted by their ancestors, centuries ago.

I need not multiply my accusations against the spurious civil government, which afflicts every nation These, I have, now, brought against it, suffice to show, that such government is the heaviest curse, under which earth groans.

Now, what must be the effect of such government on the mass of its subjects but to make them ignorant and base and wretched?—what less, in a word, than to make the elevating and christianizing of them impossible, so long as such government is allowed its sway over them?

And, yet, the great mass of christians uphold such government! And even they, who have the care and control of missionary undertakings, uphold it! How absurd, that the advocates of such government should be engaged in sending forth missionaries to evangelize the heathen! The very thing most needed to get the heathen into circumstances, in which they can be reached by the truth, is the subversion of their oppressive civil governments. But if the missionaries are like those, who send them (, and this is to be taken for granted,) they will rather sympathize with these governments than seek to subvert them. The celebrated Swartz kept himself on good terms with the oppressive governments around him. Even when these governments were at war with each other, they were at peace with this idolized missionary. What, however, of the fruits of his labors did these withering governments leave? Almost nothing. When he had passed away, and another band of missionaries had come to the scene of his labors, scarce an evidence could they find, that he had ever been there;—scarce a trace of his triumphs was left.

How great and urgent, then, is the world's need of righteous civil government!—and how small the prospect of speedily obtaining it!

To whom, but to christians and reformers, shall we look to set up righteous civil government in the earth? I say christians *and* reformers:—for, if it is true, that every christian is, because he is a christian, a reformer; it is, also, true, that there are reformers, who are not christians To whom, I repeat, but to them can we look to establish righteous civil government? Nevertheless, until they are freed from their false education on this subject, we shall look to them in vain.

Christians are educated to draw a line between religion and politics, and to regard religion as one thing, and politics as another. They are educated to look upon the civil government as a thing distinct and different from the Divine government, instead of being but a department of that government—and a department too, in which there is required to be as full and pure and influential and decisive an exhibition of truth, justice, mercy, as in any other department of the Divine government. "Render unto Cæsar the things, which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things, which are God's", means with the great majority of christians, that civil government is entitled to some things, to which God is not entitled; and that it may not only lack identity with the Divine government in its aims and interests, but may, at some points, be actually and diametrically opposed to it Urge the duty of making civil government religious and holy, and the great mass of christians will pronounce you foolish, fanatical, mad. "Bible politics" is, in their eyes, a solecism, a self-contradiction, an absurdity. No exercise draws out their contempt and hatred more promptly and fully than "preaching politics". You may as well talk to them of the duty of making brothels pious, and of sanctifying dram-shops and gambling houses, as of the duty of bringing civil government under the control of religion. They do not believe, that God requires civil government to be holy. They do, it is true, admit the rule: "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God":—but they believe, that civil government constitutes an exception to this rule, and is exempt from its obligation. In short, they do not believe, that holiness is becoming to civil government. They admit, that "holiness unto the Lord" should be inscribed upon pots and horse-bells. But such an inscription upon civil government!—oh, it would be the most out-of-the-way-thing, in their eyes! It would be to "cast pearls before swine". It would be, a "jewel of gold in a swine's snout". It would be carrying religion into the Devil's own province And, yet, these very christians, who consign civil government to the Devil, identify themselves with just such civil government, as they consign to the Devil; vote for its oppressive and profligate administrators; and wallow in its corruptions!

We referred to the false education of reformers, as well as of christians, in regard to civil government. Antislavery reformers, Temperance reformers, Land reformers, and other reformers ask for reformations at

the hands of government. But they do not ask for righteous government. Nay, they do not wish government to be righteous. They prefer, that it should continue to be unrighteous. Each class of these reformers wishes success for its own reform; and, as to the other wrongs of government, it prefers, that at least some of them should continue. Land reformers, whilst calling on government to espouse their favorite reform, are, nevertheless, willing to vote for slaveholders and rum-sellers. Antislavery reformers ask government to be antislavery; but are willing that government should be indifferent to the claims of the landless. And Temperance reformers are ready to vote for land-monopolists and slaveholders, if they believe, that they can, thereby, promote the cause of temperance. Each class of reformers is a one idea-class of reformers. Each class of reformers goes for but a fraction of truth, and turns its back upon, or even arrays itself against, the remainder of truth. In a word, each class of reformers is too selfish to care for the reforms, which other classes of reformers are interested in; and, I add, that it is too foolish, because of its selfishness, to accomplish the success of even its own reform.

Such, as we have now described them, are the great mass of christians and reformers in their attitude toward civil government—in their views of civil government. And even those of us, who desire to see civil government righteous, and to see the success of every just reform—how prone are we to an undue reliance on numbers, and how slow are we to identify ourselves with a party, which is weak in numbers, and strong only in the truth! We long for success; and, like most men, we are, more or less, under the delusion, that success is to be found in numbers. But our success consists in doing our duty; and equally complete is our success, whether ten millions, or ten thousands, or simply ten persons go along with us. It is a sad spectacle, when a good man's faith becomes so weak, that he shrinks from a minority, and construes a minority into a failure. Who was ever so successful, as Jesus Christ? And when was He more successful than when He hung upon the cross? Then it was, however, when, by having done his last duty and "finished" his work, he had reached the highest success—then it was, that His disciples all forsook Him, and that truth was left in a minority of one. Strictly speaking, truth is never in a minority. God is, always, on its side; and He, of Himself, constitutes a majority. For the like reason, all, who identify themselves with truth, are in the majority.

But, I must close. In the light of the truth, beauty, and value of righteous civil government, how defensible, needful, important is the Liberty Party! The object of this Party is to realize the just idea of civil government, and to secure to the human family the blessings of impartial and righteous civil government. Alas, how greatly does our own nation need these blessings! Alas, how greatly do the other poor bleeding and crushed nations of the earth need them! Give to all nations righteous civil government—and christianity, now so obstructed by unrighteous civil government, will, then, travel triumphant through them all. Give to all nations righteous civil government, and then the heart's desire of the land reformer will be realized, for, then, there will be no landless: and, then, the heart's desire of the temperance reformer will be realized, for, then, there will be no dram-shops: and, then, the heart's desire of the antislavery reformer will be realized, for, then, there will be no slaves: and then the heart's desire of the advocate of peace will be realized, for then there will be no war: and, then, the heart's desire of the advocate of woman's rights will be realized, for, then, justice will be done both to man and woman. Come that blessed day! Come quickly!

22

KOSSUTH.

PETERBORO, May 25, 1852.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS,

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You call, in your newspaper, for my opinions of Kossuth and his Mission. There are others, who also desire to know them.

To write for the million is, of itself, great encouragement and stimulus to write: whilst to know, that it is only a handful, who read what is written by one, who takes the unusual and offensive views of things, which I take, necessarily goes far to discourage such a one from writing, and even to disqualify him for it. No person can write too well, even if conscious of having the whole world for his readers. Nevertheless, with such a consciousness to arouse his powers, he writes more willingly and more ably than he could without it. Is not this true, in the case of yourself, Mr. Goodell, Mr. Garrison, and others, who write for an uphill and unpopular cause?

Now, if there is not something in what I have just said, which should excuse me from responding to your call, there is, at least, something in it to mitigate the offence of writing, without due spirit and study, the pages, which you request me to write. Under this view of the case, I proceed to write them.

I sympathize neither with the most favorable, nor with the most unfavorable opinions entertained of Kossuth.—In the esteem of many, he is the man of men. On the other hand, there are some, who believe him to be weak in judgment; and some, who believe him to be destitute of integrity.

I have not seen Kossuth:—but I have read his Speeches. The impression they have made upon me is, that he is not only transcendently eloquent—especially when his country, his deeply wronged country, is his theme—but that he is a man of extraordinary judgment, discernment, skill, tact: and that he is, moreover, eminently unselfish. Nevertheless, Kossuth is, in my opinion, but a patriot.

To be a patriot—a true, and not a sham patriot—such a patriot, as is Kossuth—a lover of one's country, instead of a lover of one's self—is, indeed, something. Nay, it is much. He is at a wide remove from unmingled and mere selfishness, who, instead of being absorbed with his individual interests, carries in his patriotic and sympathising bosom the interests of a whole nation. Still, it is not in the patriot, that we are to find the summit of human excellence.

It is the philanthropist, who is the highest style of man. His country is the world. His countrymen mankind. And such a one loves God, as well as man. It never fails, that he, who loves all men, loves their Maker also.

But we have no right to contrast the philanthropist with the patriot for the purpose of disparaging and underrating the patriot. The different quarters of a City are suddenly and simultaneously fired. A vast amount of property and thousands of lives are in awful peril. Now, he is a noble and glorious inhabitant of that City, who, in this hour of her distress, forgets his property, his family, and himself, and studies and toils to save the whole City. Less noble and glorious, indeed, is that other inhabitant, but still not without praise, who, in this dread hour, thinking not of his possessions, and refusing to betake himself to safety, searches out a helpless friend, and, at every hazard to his own life, devotes himself to the preservation of his friend's life. What, if he is guilty of neglecting all others, but this friend?—and what, if, in making a way for this friend, he is even guilty of jostling others, and impeding their progress, and endangering their escape?—nevertheless, because all this is done, not for his own sake, but for the sake of another, we are far more disposed to praise than blame him. It is true, that it requires a John Howard to perform the disinterested and sublime part of the former inhabitant; and that Kossuth is to be compared only with the latter inhabitant. Nevertheless, how small a proportion of men are worthy of even so honorable a comparison! It is true, that Kossuth, as he leads poor Hungary by the hand, concerned alone for her deliverance, is guiltily forgetful of others. But is he not equally and beautifully forgetful of himself also? It is true, that he is so absorbed with the wrongs of his own country, as to forget the unspeakably deeper wrongs, which are suffered in other countries; and that he is so anxious to terminate the wrongs of his own country, as to descend to the policy of ignoring and blinking those deeper wrongs, and of flattering, for the sake of gaining their favor and help, the very authors of those deeper wrongs. Nevertheless, when we look at Kossuth's great and lofty object, and at the self-sacrificing benevolence with which he pursues it, we can pardon much in him, which we would not pardon, were it the offspring of selfishness, instead of patriotism. It is true, that a philanthropist could not come from Ireland to America to ask help to overthrow Irish oppression, and, all this time, keep silence respecting the infinitely greater American oppression. It is true, that a philanthropist could not go from America to Brazil for help to put an end to American slavery, without reminding the Brazilians, that they too are slaveholders. It is true, that a philanthropist could not do all the things, which Kossuth does. But a patriot can:—and when he does, let us not visit unmitigated condemnation upon him. Let us remember, that his errors are committed for his country's sake; and let us not treat them as the errors of a selfish man, who, were self-expense involved, would not help to lighten the burdens, which crush any of his fellow men—even his own countryman. I admit, that Kossuth cannot afford to be measured by the standard of philanthropy. But, when measured by his proper standard—by the standard of patriotism—what patriot is there, either of ancient or modern times, who surpasses him?

The world is, yet, to see a philanthropic political revolution—a revolution, which shall place its subjects on the side of man and liberty. Hitherto, the best political revolutions, instead of transforming their subjects into lovers of man and lovers of liberty, have left them the enemies of both—and, even, increasedly such. The American Revolution is no exception to this remark: and how lamentable, that it is not! Had that Revolution been the offspring of philanthropy, the whole civilized world would, probably, ere this, have been won to its blessed example. But, it had no higher parentage than patriotism:—and America is, at this day, the mightiest of all hinderances to the political redemption of the nations. Had the American Revolution originated, been carried on, and consummated, in philanthropy, America would not, now, be preeminent in her hatred and contempt of man, and in her hatred and contempt of liberty. That she loves white men, is no more evidence, that she loves man; and that she loves liberty for white men is no more evidence, that she loves liberty; than being a sectarian is evidence of loving christians. He, alone, loves man, who loves all men: and he, alone, loves liberty, who loves it for all men. The slaveholder fancies, that he loves liberty. But he mistakes self-love for the love of liberty. Did he love liberty, he would love to see it enjoyed by his slaves. Strenuousness for his own liberty, so far from being an evidence of his love of liberty, is characteristic of all other tyrants, as well as of himself. The "liberty", which Edmund Burke says the slaveholder is preeminently attached to, deserves not that name. True liberty is a beautiful and holy thing, which cannot, possibly, be appreciated by one, who is "proud, jealous, stubborn, haughty"; and as such is the slaveholder characterized by Burke.

That America prates much of liberty proves but her self-ignorance or hypocrisy. That she, whilst holding millions in a bondage, one hour of which is worse than a whole life-time of Hungarian oppression, should presume to send a ship for Kossuth, and to express sympathy with Hungary, proves only, that she either has no eyes to see herself with, or that she wilfully shuts them. Again, is it not the affectation of all affectations, and the farce of all farces, for *America* to complain of the interference of Russia with the cause of liberty in Hungary? "O man, that judgest them, which do such things, and doest the same!" Hayti had gained her independence. Napoleon resorted to the policy of starving her into submission to his despotism. He called on America to concur in this policy; and America was shameless enough to concur in it. Congress suspended trade with Hayti. Scarcely less shameless was she in instructing her representatives in the Congress at Panama to oppose the recognition of Hayti as a free and independent State. But these are not the only instances in which America has furnished Russia with precedents for her attack on Hungarian liberty. Mexico and Columbia were about to deliver Cuba from the yoke of Spain, and her slaves from the yoke of slavery. For this America threatened them with war; and they desisted. Nay, in her diplomatic intercourse with Spain, she went so far as to threaten to take possession of Cuba and Porto Rico:—so determined was she to prevent the independence of these islands, and the abolition of slavery in them. But "the cream of the joke" is, that America, which now denounces Russia for crushing the cause of liberty in Hungary, did actually call on Russia to help her crush the cause of liberty in Cuba!

I am not of the croaking number, who believe, that the world is getting worse. On the contrary, I am among those hopeful ones, who believe, that it is getting better. I am not sure, however, that, among these great political revolutions, which good men love to contemplate, there is a single one, which helped to make the world better. That the world has been benefitted—has been moved upward—by some of these revolutions is a common admission. But, in my esteem, the praise is to be bestowed less on the revolutions, and more on the growth of these great and good principles, which the revolutions did, but so imperfectly, illustrate—did, but so partially, carry out. Highly prized as are those revolutions, they, nevertheless, did more to cramp and pervert, than to develope these principles. This is not strange, seeing, that the revolutions were chiefly the work of patriots, and that the principles were nursed in the bosom of philanthropy. The seed, which philanthropy is ever sowing, becomes a very different harvest in the hands of mere patriots from what it would have been, had the reaping been left to the sower. Very distant, perhaps, is the day, when philanthropic political revolutions shall take place—revolutions in the name of the human brotherhood and for the human brotherhood. But they will yet take place;—and, when they do, then mere patriotism will be counted as a very poor thing. Glorious battles will be fought in those revolutions. I say not, that swords and guns will be used in them. Perhaps, they will not be. But, whether they will, or will not be, philanthropy can, at all events, be pretty safely entrusted with the selection of her own weapons.

I am, my dear Douglass,
with great regard,
your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

TO THE LIBERTY PARTY OF THE COUNTY OF MADISON.

PITTSBURG, *August* 13, 1852.

I HAVE obeyed your wishes, and attended the Pittsburg Convention. It closed its labors, last evening.

I came to the Convention with very little hope, that it would take what I deem to be the proper ground of a political party. It has not taken it distinctly—perhaps not at all. But whether it has, or has not taken it, it has come much nearer to it than I feared it would. Again, whilst I shall go home less displeased with the proceedings of the Convention than I feared I should be, I shall, also, go home entertaining far more favorable opinions than before of the mass of the abolitionists. I think I am safe in saying, that of the thousands who came to the Convention, there are not five hundred, nor three hundred, who are not with us in spirit and in principle. Not only is it true, that Charles Durkee and General Paine of Wisconsin are heartily and wholly with the Liberty Party; but it is also true, that those noble men are, in this respect, no more than fair specimens of the great majority of the Western abolitionists.

The West is ahead of the East. The ardent, generous, confiding West is not so trammeled as the East with the habit of circumspection and calculation. Whilst the Eastern man pauses to reckon results, the Western man pushes on to realize them. The Eastern abolitionists are, however, making progress. Abolitionists of the type of Charles Francis Adams will not be able to imbue with their conservative spirit the reformers around them. On the contrary, these reformers will be continually imbuing with their radical spirit abolitionists of the type of Charles Francis Adams.

I have named Mr. Adams. I cannot forbear to add, that I am greatly pleased with him. His characteristic dignity is the perfectly natural outgrowth of his high-souled integrity and rare mental discipline. I was happy to see, that his habit of caution and conservatism was not proof against the atmosphere, which surrounded him here. He made manifest progress in the two days; and could he mingle for twenty days with Western abolitionists, he would not fear, that the cause of Liberty is in danger of being misdirected or harmed in their hands. In a word, it did Mr. Adams and some other New England men great good to come to the Pittsburg Convention.

As I have already virtually said, the immense "mass Convention," as it was called, was prepared to plant itself on the high ground of the Liberty Party—was, indeed, already on that ground. But the Convention proper, being a selection from the masses, contained, as was natural, a greater relative amount of wariness and timidity. Nevertheless had the Convention proper, instead of appointing a Committee to prepare a platform, prepared it without such intervention, I have no doubt, that the platform would have been distinctly and fully that of the Liberty Party. But this Committee, being a selection from the select, was still more characterized than even the Convention proper by wariness and timidity. Indeed, I have, scarcely, a doubt, that, had this Convention continued another day, its platform would have been nearly all, that we could desire. What rapid progress the Convention made in the Session of the last afternoon! In that Session, it struck out the most offensive of all of those wretched Resolutions, which contain limitations and implications against Liberty. In that Session, it came very near adopting Mr. Tappan's Resolution, the adoption of which would have nullified all those limitations and implications. And it was in that Session, that the Convention adopted so enthusiastically, and with but three dissenting voices, the glorious Resolution in favor of Land Reform—that Reform, which is emphatically the own sister of the Abolition Reform.

I came to the Convention with the purpose of *insisting* on but two things; and I adhered to my purpose. These two things are

1st. That the Convention should organize a permanent party—and, therefore, a party, which should be as comprehensive in its scope, as is civil government itself—and, therefore, a party, which should look after all the political interests of all the people, white and black, male and female.

2d. That the Convention should declare slavery to be utterly incapable of legalization.

On these two things I insisted, both in the Committee and in the Convention. Four members of the Committee were with me: and I must do the dozen, who opposed us, the justice to say, that several of them evidently believed, that the two things, which I insisted on, were in their own series of Resolutions, and were expressed in better language there than in my series. Indeed, I firmly believe, that the Convention would not have adopted the platform, which they did adopt, had they not judged, that these two things were substantially in it.

Perhaps, the two things, on which I insisted, are in the platform. I will not say, that they are not. But, if they are, they are, nevertheless, obscurely expressed, and that, too, whilst things to the contrary of them are in it, and are clearly expressed; or, if not clearly expressed, nevertheless clearly implied. Who can read the platform, and deny, that its clear implication is, that slavery in the States has not only a legal existence, but a legal existence, which is permitted by the Federal Constitution? Indeed, the platform goes so far as to admit, by clear implication, that a State Government is at liberty, so far as the Federal Constitution is concerned, to deprive persons "of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law."

It was said in the Convention, and with manifest influence, that my phrases: "slavery is incapable of legalization," "slavery cannot be legalized," &c. &c., are absurd. Indeed, more than once or twice, I was kindly told, out of the Convention, that, if I were not in the habit of expressing myself so obscurely and unintelligibly on this and kindred points, I should be able to bring more persons to adopt my views. But, it seems to me, that this logic, which had so much effect

on the Convention, is of that circular kind, which, though apt to be very plausible and effectual, is, nevertheless, very unsound. This logic ran after this manner: "For Mr. Smith to say, that slavery cannot be legalized, is nonsensical and absurd. Virginia has laws for slavery. They may be unjust laws. But there they are, outstanding and fixed facts, the existence of which is not to be disputed." The circular logicians, having assumed in this case the very thing to be proved, viz., that what they called laws are laws, obtained, at least in their own esteem, a very quick and easy victory over me. My answer to them was, for substance: "Not only is every unconstitutional enactment among the Statutes of Virginia no law, but every enactment among them, whether it does or does not accord with the constitution, is also no law, provided its purport and object are such, as transcend the limits and powers of human legislation. For instance, the authorizing men to murder men, or, what is worse, the authorizing men to enslave men, transcends such limits and powers, and hence all enactments to these ends are void, and no law. It is for the like reason that a 'sumptuary law' is but a nominal law, and is, in strictness, no law. We are all prepared to say, that enactments prescribing what we shall eat, drink, and wear, are no law. But the reason, why they are no law, is simply because the legislature has got beyond its province, when it presumes to meddle with such subjects. And thus might we argue, in respect to enactments, which should presume to prescribe the intercourse and endearments between parent and child."

I said, that we are all prepared to treat a sumptuary law as no law. How grossly inconsistent are we then—nay, how grossly wicked—when we accord to an enactment for slavery the name, dignity, and sanction of law!

To help me understand myself, these, my instructors in logic, would kindly put words into my mouth, and say: "We understand you, Mr. Smith. What you mean, and all what you mean, is, that these laws for slavery are unjust laws. We, also, believe them to be unjust laws; and, hence, we are, really, together." But I was too obtuse to receive this their kind interpretation of myself; and, therefore, I would, over and over again, explain, or try to explain, the difference between an enactment, which I call no law, and an enactment, which I am willing to call but an unjust law. I would say, that an enactment, fixing the rate of interest as high as fifteen per cent. per annum, is an unjust law—but that it is not to be treated as no law. It is an enactment, which should be repealed or modified; but it should not, like an enactment for murder or slavery, be trampled under foot, and treated as no law. So, too, in respect to an unwise enactment for regulating travel. The matter of regulating travel, as well as that of regulating interest, comes within the field of human legislation; and hence, an enactment regarding it is not to be treated and trampled upon, as is an enactment for murder or slavery.

I would here throw out the remark, that few persons seem to have considered how very narrow is the field of human legislation, and how very far it falls short of being commensurate with the whole field of human interests, relations and obligations. It is the want of such consideration, that exposes us and many another people to be ruined by legislative usurpation and despotism.

But, notwithstanding all the fault I have found with the platform of the Free Democracy, I, nevertheless, regard myself as a member of that party. It is a good party—and it will, rapidly, grow better. Do you fear, that it will break up and disgrace itself, as did the Free Soil party? You need not fear it. Low as was the platform of that party, the party itself (or, at least, a large share of it) was far lower. But the Free Democracy is as much higher than its own platform, as that platform is higher than the platform of the Free Soil party. Hence, "Excelsior" will be most emphatically the fit motto of the Free Democracy.

Not one year should be allowed to pass away—no, nor half one year—before the platform of the Free Democracy, which, in truth, is not its platform, but only the platform of the Pittsburg Convention, and, that too, the little, instead of the big Convention, should be so modified, as distinctly to meet all the demands of truth. Alas, what a pity, that this platform is not now such, as to teach the slaveholder, in bold and unmistakeable terms, that one of the aims of the Free Democracy is to strip him and his "peculiar institution" of the covering, and sanction, and respectability of law, and to hold up to the loathing and execration of the world a naked pirate in the one and a naked piracy in the other—a pirate and a piracy too, that far outstrip all others in atrocity and mischief! Such an exposure would work the speedy death of slavery: and, without such an exposure, it will never die, until it shall die in violence and blood.

But warm, as are my hopes of the well-doing of the Free Democracy, they may, nevertheless, be blasted: and, hence, I cannot advise the disbanding of the Liberty Party. The next meeting of the Liberty Party is to be Wednesday, the 1st day of September. It should be numerously attended. Whilst I hope, that the meeting will not array itself against, but will, on the contrary, resolve to act with, the Free Democracy, at least for the present—I also hope, that it will advise the Liberty Party to continue its organization, until such time, as the Free Democracy shall have distinctly and fully covered the ground of the Liberty Party.

Of course, I did not vote for the Pittsburg platform. I can never vote for it until it shall boldly and distinctly utter the great truth, that the Free Democracy aims to bring under its impartial regard all the political interests of all classes of the people; and also the other great truth, that slavery, which is the most atrocious and abominable of all the forms of piracy, can never be known as law.

Nor did I vote in the Convention, for Mr. Hale and Mr. Julian. I voted for these true and tried men, William Goodell and James H. Collins. Nevertheless, I hope to find myself able to vote, at the Election, for Mr. Hale and Mr. Julian, both of whom are beloved in private life, and both of whom have honorably distinguished themselves in public life. I cannot doubt, that Mr. Julian scouts the idea of the possible legalization of slavery: and, in the Boston rescue trials, Mr. Hale scouted it. Is it said, that it was only in rhetorical flourishes, that he did so? I answer, that, I trust, that Mr. Hale will, ere the Election, make it indisputably manifest, that he is established in the principle, that there can no more be a human, than a divine, law for converting a man into a thing; and that to recognize, and dignify, as law the enactment, which attempts such a conversion, is a high crime against both God and man.

GERRIT SMITH.

24 Sept. 30, 1852

NATIONAL LIBERTY PARTY.

At the National Liberty Party Convention, held in Syracuse September 30th, 1852, the following Resolutions reported by Gerrit Smith, as Chairman of the Business Committee, were unanimously adopted:

1st. Resolved, that the Liberty Party cannot consent to fall below, nor, in any degree, to qualify, its great central principle, that all persons—black and white, male and female—have equal political rights, and are equally entitled to the protection and advantages of Civil Government.

2d. Resolved, that, inasmuch as murder is an element in the infernal compound of slavery, there can no more be a law for slavery than for murder.

3d. Resolved, that passing events, instead of shaking, do but confirm, our conviction, that no political party can bless the world, or be blest of God, which does not follow the example of the Liberty Party, and take for its basis impartial and universal political righteousness: and which does not follow the example of the Liberty Party, and rely less upon its numbers than upon the truthfulness and value of its doctrines.

4th. Resolved, that the Free Democracy will fail, as did the Free Soil Party, unless it shall openly and fearlessly aim to identify itself with every political truth;—as well with the political truth, that Government is bound to suppress the traffic in intoxicating drinks, and to put an end to land-monopoly, as with the political truth, that Government is bound to enact no law, and obey no law, and know no law for slavery, or any other piracy.

The Convention then nominated WILLIAM GOODELL of New-York for President of the United States. S. M. BELL of Virginia for Vice President.

After an hour's intermission, the Convention reassembled; and Gerrit Smith presented the following Address, which was adopted.

To the Liberty Party,

Notwithstanding we believe, that the mass of the members of the Free Democracy are in substantial agreement with the Liberty Party: and notwithstanding we believe, that the platform, constructed at Pittsburgh in the name of the Free Democracy, is, if judged of in the light of its general principles and declarations, instead of the unhappy specifications and admissions, which contradict these principles and declarations, essentially the platform of the Liberty Party; we, nevertheless, believe, that the organization of the Liberty Party should be maintained;—at least until such time, as the Free Democracy shall, in its aims and character, be indisputably and manifestly one with the Liberty Party.

And notwithstanding our high respect for John P. Hale and George W. Julian, and our confidence, that they are earnest abolitionists and generous philanthropists, and our deep desire, that they may draw many hundreds of thousands of votes from the proslavery candidates of the proslavery parties, we, nevertheless, cannot commend them to the votes of the Liberty Party, until we certainly know, that they embrace the distinctive and vital principles of that Party. To the end, then, that the Liberty Party may honor and preserve these precious principles, and to the end too, that it may thus hasten the day, when they shall become, distinctly and unquestionably, a part of the creed of the Free Democracy, we have nominated candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency.

John P. Hale and George W. Julian, if indeed not already prepared to represent the Liberty Party, will, we believe, be prepared to do so, ere long. But our candidate, Mr. Goodell, does now represent it. In him is a present, as well as unambiguous and full representation of its great and ultimately triumphant principles. We cannot speak as strongly of our other candidate, Mr. Bell;—for he is comparatively a stranger to us. Nevertheless from the fact, that he subscribed the Minority or Liberty Party Report at Pittsburgh, we infer, that the principles of the Liberty Party are his principles.

Pre-eminently entitled, as are Mr. Goodell and Mr. Bell to a large vote, we nevertheless expect, that it will be very small. It would be small, even were it the vote of all the members of their Party. But much smaller will it be, now, that so many of its members, believing that Mr. Hale and Mr. Julian do, already, hold to all the great principles of the Liberty Party, will, therefore, vote for them, instead of for Mr. Goodell and Mr. Bell. Whilst, however, we shall not reproach them for so voting; we, nevertheless, believe, that the voting of Liberty Party men for Messrs. Hale and Julian is, to say the least, premature. On the other hand, we believe, that, in no event, can our voting for Messrs. Goodell and Bell prove a matter of regret to us. Such voting will contribute to continue the organization of the Liberty Party: and the continued organization of that Party, cannot fail to promote the improvement and success of the Free Democracy. Again, should it turn out, as we believe it will not, that the Free Democracy, instead of advancing and triumphing, shall fall back and perish, then there will remain, in the surviving Liberty Party, a sound nucleus, around which political reformers can gather for the accomplishment of their high and holy objects.

NEW-YORK STATE LIBERTY PARTY.

The Convention of the New-York State Liberty Party, held in Syracuse Sept. 30th and Oct. 1st, 1852, nominated

WILLIAM R. SMITH of Wayne for Governor.
J. PRESTON MANN of Jefferson for Lieutenant Governor.
CHARLES A. WHEATON of Onondaga for Canal Commissioner.
WILLIAM SHAPCOTT of Cayuga for State Prison Inspector.

The Convention also nominated Presidential Electors.

William Shapcott of Auburn will furnish, without charge, State Tickets and Electoral Tickets to those, who may apply to him for them. It is hoped, that he will have applications from many Counties.

To the Voters of the Counties of Oswego and Madison:

You nominated me for a seat in Congress, notwithstanding I besought you not to do so. In vain was my resistance to your persevering and unrelenting purpose.

I had reached old age. I had never held office. Nothing was more foreign to my expectations, and nothing was more foreign to my wishes, than the holding of office. My multiplied and extensive affairs gave me full employment. My habits, all formed in private life, all shrank from public life. My plans of usefulness and happiness could be carried out only in the seclusion, in which my years had been spent.

My nomination, as I supposed it would, has resulted in my election—and, that too, by a very large majority. And, now, I wish, that I could resign the office, which your partiality has accorded to me. But, I must not—I cannot. To resign it would be a most ungrateful and offensive requital of the rare generosity, which broke through your strong attachments to party, and bestowed your votes on one, the peculiarities of whose political creed leave him without a party. Very rare, indeed, is the generosity, which was not to be repelled by a political creed, among the peculiarities of which are

1st. *That it acknowledges no law, and knows no law, for slavery:—that, not only, is slavery not in the Federal Constitution, but that, by no possibility, could it be brought either into the Federal, or into a State, Constitution.*

2d. *That the right to the soil is as natural, absolute, and equal, as the right to the light and the air.*

3d. *That political rights are not conventional, but natural—inhering in all persons, the black as well as the white, the female as well as the male.*

4th. *That the doctrine of Free Trade is the necessary outgrowth of the doctrine of the human brotherhood; and that to impose restrictions on commerce is to build up unnatural and sinful barriers across that brotherhood.*

5th. *That national wars are as brutal, barbarous, and unnecessary, as are the violence and bloodshed, to which misguided and frenzied individuals are prompted: and that our country should, by her own Heaven-trusting and beautiful example, hasten the day, when the nations of the earth "shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more".*

6th. *That the province of Government is but to protect—to protect persons and property; and that the building of railroads and canals and the care of schools and churches fall entirely outside of its limits, and exclusively within the range of "the voluntary principle". Narrow, however, as are these limits, every duty within them is to be promptly, faithfully, fully performed:—as well, for instance, the duty on the part of the Federal Government to put an end to the dramshop manufacture of paupers and madmen in the City of Washington, as the duty on the part of the State Government to put an end to it in the State.*

7th. *That, as far as practicable, every officer, from the highest to the lowest, including especially the President and Postmaster, should be elected directly by the people.*

I need not extend any further the enumeration of the features of my peculiar political creed:—and I need not enlarge upon the reason, which I gave, why I must not, and cannot, resign the office, which you have conferred upon me. I will only add, that I accept it; that my whole heart is moved to gratitude by your bestowment of it; and that, God helping me, I will so discharge its duties, as neither to dishonor myself, nor you.

GERRIT SMITH.

PETERBORO, November 5th, 1852.

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PETERBORO, Oct. 18, 1851.

GREENE C. BRONSON, Esq.,

MY DEAR SIR,

So notoriously bad am I—so low have I sunk in the public esteem—that when a man is to be most effectually stigmatized, he is likened to myself. I see by your late letter to Mr. Dalevan, that even you—my early friend—my life-long friend—have fallen into this fashion of making me the example and standard of misconduct; and of bringing fatal odium upon an opponent by publishing him to be as bad, as I am. A few years ago, a very eminent jurist (Mr. J. C. Spencer) sought to peril the election of the late Secretary of State (Mr. H. S. Randall) by comparing him to myself: and, now, a no less eminent jurist is, by the like means, damaging a rival candidate for Governor. I say so, because you have adopted, and repeated, the declaration, that "Myron Holley Clark entertains similar views to those of Gerrit Smith."

What are these views, which Mr. Clark is said to hold, in common with myself? They are

1st. The unconstitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Act.
2d. The unconstitutionality of all slavery.
3d. The impossibility of legalizing any slavery—the impossibility of imbuing such a matchless crime and abomination with the spirit of law, and of clothing it with the authority and sacredness of law.

It is, altogether, foreign to the purpose of this letter to speak either well or ill of Mr. Clark. And yet, as I pass on, I feel constrained to say, that you have, probably, done great injustice to your rival. Mr. Clark is a respectable man; and, that he is, is sufficient proof, that the views, here attributed to him, are not his views. Yet awhile, and he, who entertains these views, will be an outcast from American society, instead of a respectable member of it. Great parties have nominated Mr. Clark for Governor. But this could not have been, had he really entertained these views.

I do not forget, that it is on no less authority, than Mr. John Thomas, that you have connected Mr. Clark's name with these odious views. Nevertheless, it seems impossible, that you can really believe, that Mr. Clark holds them. You, doubtless, agree with me, that Mr. Thomas is—at least, to some extent—mistaken; and that, in his conversation with Mr. Clark, he misapprehended, or mistranslated, the words of Mr. Clark. The words of a politician are not, always, easy—nor, indeed, are they, always, intended to be easy—of translation. Tallyrand, you recollect, held, that the legitimate use of words is to hide our meaning. But, I trust, that Mr. Clark does not belong to the Tallyrand school of politicians: and, hence, I ascribe Mr. Thomas' report of his conversation with Mr. Clark to a guiltless blunder, lying somewhere between these good gentlemen—to unfortunate forms of speech on the part of good Mr. Clark, or unfortunate interpretations on the part of good Mr. Thomas.

Whether, however, Mr. Clark does, or does not, avow the views in question, it is certain, that you do not. There needs no further proof than your letter before me, that you make a merit of, and seek advantage in, loathing and deriding these views. You believe in a law for slavery—in a law for that stupendous piracy, which strips its victims of every right, and leaves him a prey to every wrong. And though you believe in a "higher law," you, nevertheless, scorn the idea of its nullifying a law for slavery. I do not myself believe in a "higher law." On the contrary, I believe, that the distinction of "higher law" and "lower law" is one of exceedingly evil influence. Law is a unit. It is the same in every land, and in every age; the same on earth, that it is in heaven. You believe with me, that slavery is condemned of heaven, and cannot be a law of heaven. Nevertheless, it is, in your esteem, a law of earth; and a law, which men are as strongly and religiously bound to obey, as they are to obey any law. I am aware, that, in all this, you are backed by American jurisprudence and American christianity. But have you never suspected, that slavery has twisted the religion and courts of our country quite out of harmony with true jurisprudence and true christianity? And have you never suspected, that the day may come, when it will be a frightful blot on your judicial fame, that, after all the ability, and learning, and impartiality of your legal Ophiolots, you, nevertheless, had no sufficiently holy, and elevated, and sublime—nay, no sufficiently decent—views of law to restrain you from sinking it into the patron, and protector, and sanctifier of what John Wesley so justly calls: "the sum of all villainies?" Surely, surely, my old friend, "the judicious Hooker" had never spoke so eloquently, so rapturously, so divinely of law, had he believed with you, that law was a dirty and devilish instrument, whereby to make slaves, and catch slaves. Surely, surely, my old friend, a better age will not fail to be shocked at the folly and madness, which, in this age, convert the veriest outlaw into law, and claim for the most sweeping and revolting piracy the reverence due to law. I add to my inquiries of you, whether you have never suspected, that, notwithstanding it is, now, nearly forty years, since you made a public profession of christianity, it may, yet, turn out, that the christianity is alarmingly deceptive, which allows us to honor what heaven hates, and to oppose the law of God, under the plea of obeying the law of man? The religion of Daniel and of the Apostles trampled wicked enactments under foot, and hastened to "obey God rather than men." Can that be the same religion, which reverses their practice, and exalts the authority of man above the authority of God? Primitive christianity went counter to the world, and its disciples were crucified to the world. Can the modern christianity, which goes with the world, and denounces, as fools and fanatics, those, who consent to lose this life, in order to save a better, be all one with primitive christianity?

I referred to the possible effect upon your judicial fame of your confounding with law enactments for slavery—of your installing into the high and sacred place of law the abomination, that forbids marriage, and forbids the reading of the bible, and forbids all the rights of manhood, and markets men as beasts. There is another respect also, in which, I apprehend, you are damaging that fame—trifling with it, and sacrificing it, to promote a present and worthless popularity. I allude to your acquiescence in the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Act.

Even on the supposition, that the fugitive servant clause of the Constitution refers to slaves, how can you consent to regard as constitutional the Act, which, in so many respects, glaringly and grossly violates the Constitution? But how violent is such supposition!—how utterly unworthy of entertainment by a lawyer! You, doubtless, assent to the rule, laid down by the Supreme Court of the U. S., 2 Cranch 390: "Where rights are infringed, where fundamental principles are overthrown, where the general system of the laws is departed from, the legislative intention must be expressed with irresistible clearness to induce a court of justice to suppose a design to effect such objects?" Now, to claim, that this clause of the Constitution authorizes the plunging of a man into slavery, and the commission of the highest possible crime against his body and his soul, is to claim, most emphatically, that it authorizes the infringing of rights, and the overthrow of fundamental principles, and departure from the general system of the laws. But you will admit, and all will admit, that if this outrage can be found in the clause in question, it, nevertheless, is not expressed, and much less, "expressed with irresistible clearness."

Again—this clause easily admits of an innocent interpretation. It applies, in the natural use of language, to freemen—to persons capable of owing—capable of making contracts. Not only so—it is utterly incapable of application to slaves. For slaves, being in the eye of law, mere chattels, can no more make contracts, and owe service, than can horses or horse-blocks.

Will you tell me, that the framers of the Constitution intended, that the clause should apply to slaves? Nay, even did history afford proof of such intention, nevertheless, there are two reasons, why, as a lawyer, you would not [illegible] yourself of the proof.

1st. It is not what the framers—but what the adopters—of the Constitution intended. As it is not what the scrivener, who writes the deed, intended—but what the parties, named in the deed, intended.

2d. Where the letter of a law admits of a clear interpretation, we have, when interpreting it, nothing to do with any thing but its letter.

Although it is not called for by any legitimate argument, I will, nevertheless, say in this connection, that the historic facts in the case entirely forbid the imputation of a proslavery intention to the clause. The ceaselessly repeated declaration

that the fugitive servant clause is "one of the compromises of the Constitution," is the ceaselessly repeated declaration of an utter falsehood—of a sheer and impudent assumption for proslavery effect. Again—the framers of the Constitution are not to be charged with a proslavery purpose in this clause, in the face of the fact, that, only a few days after the clause was adopted, they resolved, without one dissenting voice, that the word "service" should take the place of the word "servitude" in the Constitution; and for the assigned reason, that "service" denotes the condition of freemen, and "servitude" the condition of slaves. Since, then, "service" is the word in the fugitive servant clause, that clause could not, in the eye of the Convention, that framed the Constitution, refer to slavery.

But my argument to prove, that the fugitive servant clause of the Constitution is not on the side of slavery was unnecessary. The necessity of it was superseded by the fact, that the Constitution forbids slavery. In several of its parts, it forbids it by irresistible implication; and, with emphatic directness, does it forbid slavery, when it says: "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law."

I do not forget, that it is held, that this provision of the Constitution is a negation on Federal powers only, and not on the States also. But both the letter and the history of the provision show, that this interpretation is a bald assumption, and is entirely unauthorized and absurd. Nor do I forget, that it is held, (ridiculously held,) that a mere statute for slavery answers the requirement of "due process of law." Happily in your Opinion (Hill's Report IV: 146,) you do yourself admit, that to deprive a man of his liberty "cannot be done by mere legislation". You do yourself, in that Opinion, concur with Lord Coke, that "due process of law" means proceedings, "according to the course of the common law."

You are horrified at the thought, that "*Governor* Clark," as you call him, would take the antislavery side, should the soil of our State be a hunting ground for slaves, during his Administration. But, I think, you alarm yourself needlessly. Mr. Clark lives in Canandaigua! A year ago, I went there to exert what little influence I could against the diabolical purpose of convicting man of crime for their heaven-approved rescue of "Jerry." I had no word of cheer from Mr. Clark. Indeed, save a handful of obscure worthy persons, there were none to express sympathy with me, or my mission. With that exception, God and my conscience were my only supporters. There dwells in that beautiful village a man of heart and hospitality; and, as poor Cowper said of his brother, he is "a man of learning and of manners too." This much, at least, I can say of his deportment on the occasion referred to—that, whilst others of his rank stood aloof from me, "he was not ashamed of my chain."

But no more, as to what "*Governor* Clark" would do, in the case you have supposed. I proceed to ask you—what, in such case, would *Governor* Bronson do? Would he take upon his soul the responsibility of sinking an innocent fellow man into the hell of slavery? He thinks he would. But, I trust, that, when the hour of trial should come, he would not prove himself to be as wicked, as he, now, thinks he would. I think better of him than he thinks of himself.

There is, already, a large majority of blacks in South Carolina. The reins of government may pass into their hands, any day; and their first act of retaliation might be to doom the whites of that State to slavery. Now, what if, during your Administration, some of these new slaves—say, even the most polished and pure of them—should escape into this State?—would you consent to wield your official powers for their return? Answer me "Yes"; or be honest enough to abandon your proslavery interpretation of the fugitive servant clause. For, manifestly, if that clause applies to any slaves, it applies to future, as well, as present, slaves, and to slaves of one color, and one race, as well as another.

Again—suppose the law-making power of this State were to reduce to slavery all of its citizens of the unfortunate name of Bronson (—and, of course, you hold to its perfect *legal* right to do so—) would you still be faithful to your present interpretation of the fugitive servant clause, and beseech your rescuers in Pennsylvania, or in whatever other State, you may have fled to, to leave you to your merciless pursuers? Say!—would you? Now, do not hesitate. It is but your own medicine, that I offer you. Take it—and make no wry faces;—or never offer it, again, to others. Ah, my good friend, you well know, that, were you claimed as a slave in this land, or Algiers, or elsewhere—and that whatever the Constitutions, and Statutes, and Decisions, or other authority, in behalf of the claim, you would listen to the infinitely more authoritative voice of your rights and your wrongs; of your nature and your needs; and secure your liberty, if you could—and, that too, though at the bloodiest expense to others.

After all, this question of enslaving men resolves itself into a question of simple honesty. All, that a man needs, in order to abjure all right to enslave his fellow men, is but to be simply honest. He may not see this to be so—and, therefore, he may not accuse himself of dishonesty. Nevertheless, it is so. To be simply honest! This, indeed, is all we need, in any of the duties, or circumstances, of life. It is all, that christianity requires of us. For, when she has said: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would, that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;" she, straightway, adds: "for this is the law and the prophets"—or, in other words, for this is the whole of christianity. Am I guilty, here, of ignoring repentance, faith in Christ, and, well nigh, the whole circle of christian truth and duties? Oh no! I would humbly, and gratefully, and lovingly, recognize them all. But I recognize them to be no more than means to an end—and this end is simple honesty. I need to believe in Christ, in order to be honest. I need to believe in a crucified Redeemer, that so, when a crucifying duty is required of me—such as standing by the poor hunted slave, when the great ones of earth are against him—I may be enabled to be honest, and to discharge the duty.

I might stop here, as I have, now, finished my reply to that part of your letter, which refers to myself. But there are other parts of your letter, no less objectionable than this—and you must, therefore, excuse me for pointing them out to you.

Your doctrine, that "our heavenly Father works by slow processes, both in the moral and material world" is, in my judgment, so far as respects the moral world, entirely false, and exceedingly pernicious:—and, I add, that I am very far from being satisfied with Mr. Delavan's answer to it. He but makes bad worse. He errs in subscribing to your doctrine; and he follows up his error with the greater one of denying, that God is, in the moral world, an example for man.

I admit, that moral reformations are slow. But they are not so, because God would have them so—but because the hardness of men's hearts makes them so. His words are: *To-day*, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." "*Now* is the accepted time: behold *now* is the day of salvation." "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." God is for instantaneous reformations; and His processes are all to this end. But men resist these processes; and the only reason, why they are practically slow, is because they have to overcome human resistance. Mr. Bronson should not convoy, neither should Mr. Delavan assent to the idea, that God is responsible for the practical slowness of His processes, in the moral world. Whenever it is made known to me that I must not drink intoxicating liquors, I shall most please God, and most conform to His processes, by immediately ceasing to drink them. So, too, whenever it is made known to you, that it is the duty of Government to shut up the dramshop—that great manufactory of paupers and madmen—that chief source of peril to property and life—you will most please God, and most conform to His processes, by refusing forthwith (,and, that too, whether one man, or one million of men, go with you,) to vote for any person for Governor, or Legislator, who shrinks from using the powers of Government to this end. I close under this head, with the remark, that were it a part of God's plan, that men should *gradually* surrender their sins, He would not be entitled to our love and honor:—He would not be God.

You regret, that the friends of Temperance connected their cause with the Whig party. So do I. But not for the reason you do. You regret it, because the Whig party is a political party. I—not because it is a political party—but because, like your own, it is a wicked party. To justify my calling the Whig and Democratic parties wicked, I need say nothing more against them, than that they are the great props of American slavery. For the simple reason, that the South will belong to them on no other condition; every one of our national parties, be it political or ecclesiastical, must be proslavery. Northern Whigs are claiming, that, because they are so well nigh universally opposed to the Nebraska Bill, the Whig party has become an anti-slavery party. Their claim is nonsensical. If they remain, a twelve month longer, in connexion with Southern Whigs, they will sink down into slavery, as low as ever—nay, lower than ever. Northern Whigs clamored against the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act: but soon acquiesced in it, for the sake of maintaining their union with Southern Whigs. Northern Whigs clamored against the passage of the Nebraska Bill: but they will acquiesce in that also, if they shall determine to keep up the nationality of the Whig party. Notwithstanding all the present signs to the contrary, our nation will, nevertheless, ere the next Presidential Election, be more hopelessly proslavery than ever, unless, in the meantime, the nationality of the Whig and Democratic parties shall be broken up. If party objects are so dear to Northern Whigs and Northern Democrats—if they are so infatuated in pursuit of them—that not even the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill, nor of the Nebraska Bill, can wean them from their party union with Southern Whigs and Southern Democrats—pray, what of hope remains to us from any other outrage on freedom and the country, on God and mankind?—pray, what crime against these precious interests is there, in all the range of

conception, and in all the storehouse of future events, of sufficient power to induce these deluded and reckless men to forego their party objects?

With such a party, as we have here seen your party and the Whig party to be, of course no friend of Temperance, and no other person has the right to connect himself—be the good, which he seeks from such connexion, ever so great. Furthermore, no person, connected with such a party—a party, which, among its other sins, holds, that it is lawful to enslave men—is entitled to our vote. I believe that Mr. Clark is a worthy man; and that he means to be a true friend of Temperance. Nevertheless, so long, as he remains in the Whig party, I have no right to vote for him. I have no right to hope, that he will, in the main, go against that party, whilst he is in it: and I have no right to clothe him with an influence, which will go to swell the influence of his wicked party. If, on the one hand, to vote for Mr. Clark is to vote for Temperance; nevertheless, on the other, to vote for him is to vote for the Whig party. Moreover, if for the object of remaining in the Whig party, he is willing to sacrifice the slave, what assurance can he give, that he may, not yet, be tempted to sacrifice the cause of Temperance for the same object? If Mr. Clark denies, that he has sacrificed the slave, then he has, yet, to learn, that there is no more effectual way to sacrifice the slave than to remain in a great political party, which holds that his enslavement is lawful.

So far from regarding it as wrong to connect the cause of Temperance with a political party, nothing, in my eyes, could be more proper than to connect it with a righteous political party—with a party aiming to realize the idea of a just Civil Government—a Government, that, impartially, protects all classes of its subjects. The cause of Temperance needs political action; and should seek it, at the hands of those, whose political action is prompted by an honest and wise regard for all the interests lying within the legitimate purview of Civil Government.

I see by your letter, that if Temperance must be carried into politics, you would prefer a Temperance political party—a party looking to nothing else than Temperance. But a one-idea political party is entirely indefensible. The scope of every political party should be as wide, as the scope of Civil Government; and its objects identical with the objects of Civil Government. To neglect, in our vote, every other class of persons but one, or every other interest but one, is to be grossly unjust in our vote. Our vote is to have regard to the interests of all classes, and to the whole duty of Civil Government.

I infer, however, from your letter, that, even if there were a political party, committed to the one cause of Temperance, and to no other, you would not quit your party to join it. I infer, too, that you would not have your own party go for the prohibition of the traffic in intoxicating drinks. Your piety would be less shocked by having your party suffer the dramshop to continue its manufacture of drunkards, and blasphemers, and incendiaries and murderers, than by having it fail to keep its religious character in harmony with those "slow processes," which you impute to "our heavenly Father." In short, you would have your party permit any amount of sin and sorrow, rather than have it violate its religious orthodoxy—its "slow processes"—theology.

Before reading your letter, I had supposed, that you, in common with other politicians, draw a line between politics and religion, and are very careful to keep all your politics on one side of the line, and all your religion on the other. But I am, no longer, at liberty to suppose this—now, that I see your chief solicitude for your political party is to have its "processes" all one with the Divine "processes." I am glad to see you carry your religion into politics. They totally mistake (,and more than nine-tenths of our professing christians are involved in this mistake,) who think their religion too good for their politics. No man's religion is better than his politics. His religion is pure, whose politics are pure; whilst his religion is rascally, whose politics are rascally. It is, indeed, cheering, to see you intent on making your political party a holy one. It is cheering, not merely because it argues the holiness of your religion, but because it arrays your great influence against the guilty and ruinous fallacy, that a man can have one character in religion, and another in politics; one state of heart in the Church, and an opposite one in the Caucus.

But I have made my letter too long, and I must stop. Much as I should be gratified to have you reply to it, I, nevertheless, cannot hope that you will. Occasionally, in the course of my life, when I have seen the influence of a great man very perniciously misdirected, I have ventured to write him a public letter. But, in no such instance, have I been favored with a reply: and, I presume, I shall not be in the present instance. It may be, that my reputed insanity will indispose you to reply to me—an insanity dating back to the long time ago, when I stood up, among only a little handful of persons, against the drinking of intoxicating liquors. Or it may be, that you will be indisposed by your lack of the grace of condescension toward one, who is contented with the obscurity of private life. Or it may be, that your indisposition to reply to me will proceed from some other cause. With Mr. Guthrie, with Mr. Delavan, and with other gentlemen of their position, and popularity, and powers, you are ever ready to pursue an argument;—but, I take it for granted, that you will keep silence toward

Your old friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

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WILLIAM GOODELL,

PETERBORO, Nov. 1, 1854.

DEAR FRIEND,

I see, in the "American Jubilee", that you, too, are murmuring in your criticisms upon my unlucky career in Congress. Unlucky, indeed—since it meets with favor, at the hands of neither friends nor foes!

These pl[illegible]ny Whigs are the ruin of me! They have taken all the wind out of my abolition sails! They have carried off all my abolition honors. And not content with that, they have cast me down into the class of proslavery men.

What a good end to the Whigs was the Nebraska bill! All of them in the free States arrayed themselves against it. This was, it is true, a cheap way of making themselves abolitionists. But, that it made them really such, was what they insisted on, in the ears of the credulous and silly abolitionists. I am sorry, that I have to call them credulous and silly. But, alas, too many of them have proved themselves to be such. The Whigs now claimed with more plausibility and effect than ever, that no other antislavery organization than the Whig party is necessary; and that this party is clearly entitled to the votes of all, who sympathize with the slave. All this told upon the mass of abolitionists. But in that mass there is a very radical little handful, who are slow to believe in the abolition character of the Whig party, even after all, that the Nebraska occasion has done to improve such character. They are slow to attribute a genuine abolition, to the party, that insulted and vilified them, because they would not vote for the slaveholder, Henry Clay; to the party, that elected the slaveholder, General Taylor; to the party, whose Millard Fillmore signed the diabolical fugitive slave bill. What, now, should the Whig party do with this little handful? One thing they could do with it—and that they quickly determined to do. They could strike at it, through me. By utterly disgracing me, they could do something toward disgracing it. By making it appear, that I am but a hypocrite, and no abolitionist at all, they would make room for the inference, that all the abolitionists of my radical type are but hypocrites, and no abolitionists at all. So at it they went. It was my misfortune to be a member of Congress. Hence, since voting against the Nebraska bill had become the sole test of an abolitionist—the sole proof of being an abolitionist—all that was necessary to blast my abolition character was to spread the impression, that I did not vote against it. This impression was spread, as rapidly and as universally, as the many-tongued Whig press could spread it. And my delinquency, in order to aggravate it to the utmost, was ascribed to a peculiarly disgraceful cause. It was, every where, said, that I had been guilty of preferring my bed to my duty—of preferring the indulgence of sleep to keeping vigils for liberty.

It is true, that there were two things, which stood, pretty sternly, in the way of convincing the country, that I fled from the vote on the Nebraska bill. One was that, of the radical speeches made against the Nebraska bill, mine was, confessedly on all hands, the most radical; and was, therefore, quite as like as any other speech, to be followed up by the vote of its author. The other, and far more important, thing was, that the records showed my vote against the bill. Yes, the records showed, that, in spite of my much laughed at honest habit of going to bed at nine o'clock, I was, nevertheless, in the Capitol, an hour before midnight, to vote against the Nebraska bill.

These were, indeed, obstacles in the way of the undertaking. But they were not insurmountable. "A lie well stuck to" can overcome almost any truth. The Whig press has abundantly proved the power of such perseverance. Its continued representations, from that day to this, that I did not vote against the Nebraska bill, have, in the public mind generally, overcome the truth, that I did vote against it. All truth to the contrary notwithstanding, the Whigs have, nevertheless, succeeded in getting the country to class me with the Nebraskites. I am riding in the same troop with Cass, Douglass & Co. In a word, the Whigs, as I said, at the beginning of my letter, have ruined my abolition character—and, what is worst of all, they have ruined it, in the eyes of my fellow abolitionists. Even you yourself were surprised, when learning from me, that I did vote on the Nebraska bill. You had believed until then, that I did not vote on it. On my return from Washington, I found, that some of my intelligent neighbors did not know, that I voted on it. They read Whig newspapers. I was in a County Antislavery Convention in Morrisville, a few days ago. The subject of my course on the Nebraska bill came up, and consumed an hour. Several of the speakers had supposed, until then, that I did not vote on the bill; and it was manifest from what was said, that, to this day, there is a wide spread belief, even in my own County, that I did not vote on it. Inquiries whether I voted on it, and, even, how I voted on it, are continually coming to me, by mail and otherwise, from all parts of the State. Oh, these Whig newspapers!

I will add another illustration of the power of the Whig press to mislead the abolitionists. When in Rochester, a few weeks since, I called on one of the earliest and most intelligent abolitionists. In the course of our conversation, he expressed his regret, that I did not make a speech in Congress against slavery! He reads the Whig newspapers: and, like myself, he is especially fond of the New-York Tribune. I conjecture, that, as he had read so often, in this able and interesting newspaper, of my actual, or probable, apostacy from the cause of the slave, he had lost all impression of the speeches, which I had made in Congress, for the slave.

But of all the illustrations of the power of the Whig press, over abolitionists, in this matter of my relation to the Nebraska bill, none has so much astonished me, and, I confess, none has so much pained me, as a Resolution, adopted by a National Convention of colored people, held in Cleveland, Ohio, last August. That Convention, after passing Resolutions in high praise of Mr. Garrison and other prominent abolitionists, condescended to notice me in the following insulting Resolution:

"Resolved, that we heartily regret the refusal of our *recent* ardent friend, Hon. Gerrit Smith, further to serve the cause of the oppressed in the Councils of this nation, and hope, that, on due reflection, he may yet consent to lose a meal of victuals, or an hour's sleep, for the cause of down-trodden and suffering humanity."

I must think, that, however poor and valueless my well intended services for my colored brethren, it was, in no respect, proper, but, in every respect, most ungracious and unmanlable so to requite them.

By the way, it has ever been so, that the abolitionists have consented to be befooled and bewitched by the Whig press. They take the Whig papers, and read them, and believe them; and they actually judge of each other, not in the light of what they know of each other, but in the light of what the Whig papers tell them of each other. In spite of all lessons to the contrary, the abolitionists will still have it, that the Whigs are nearly related to them—as nearly as first cousins, if not, indeed, as nearly as half brothers: and they will have it, too, that the trustworthiness of the Whigs is as great, as their relationship is near. Hence, the fact, that abolitionists have so little confidence in each other—for the Whigs succeed in destroying such confidence. And from this fact comes the further fact, that the public have but little confidence in abolitionists:—for, if they refuse to confide in each other, the public will, naturally, refuse to confide in them. I scarcely need add, that this failure, by reason of the Whigs, to command the public respect, accounts, in no small degree, for the slow progress of our principles. The best of principles are greatly prejudiced by the lack of confidence in their especial and prominent advocates.

I would say, in this connexion, that I think no better of the Democrats than I do of the Whigs. The Democrats are undisguised, open, servants of the slave-power: and, hence, I need say nothing to guard abolitionists against seductive and misleading influences, in that quarter.

But it is by no means, in respect to the Nebraska bill only, that my Congressional life has fallen under censure. Indeed, after the Whigs got the people into the habit of finding fault with me, nothing I could say, or do, would suit the people. The Whigs got me going down hill: and, then, I received a rapid succession of kicks from all sides. To illustrate for what purely

imaginary offences I was kicked, in some instances—the Garrison abolitionists of Ohio fell upon me, because, on the floor of Congress, I treated all the members of Congress, as gentlemen. Surely, there is not another person, of whom they would have complained for his conforming himself to this conventional decorum—a conventional decorum, which is observed in every other assembly, as well as in Congress; and by Garrison abolitionists, as much as by any other decent people. Nevertheless, for my having done what every one of them is civil enough to do, they actually resolved, at their late meeting in Ohio (,so far as I recollect the tenor of the Resolution,) that I am a grand corrupter of the public morals! But I do not blame these good people for their harsh Resolution. The public habit of complaining of my course in Congress was so strong, that they could not keep themselves from sliding into it. Besides, as they had passed a Resolution, two years before, that I was an apostate from the antislavery cause, they were strongly tempted to pass a Resolution now, which should be somewhat in keeping with that. But I repeat, that I do not blame them. I held the Whigs responsible for it all—for they began it all. Nor do I feel hard toward the Whigs. Poor fellows! they have so many other sins to answer for, I shall never hurt, nor hate, them for their sins against me.

I will here say, that I was struck with the influence of the Whig press upon the Temperance press. Considering, that I was one of the very earliest soldiers in the Temperance army; and that I was making Temperance speeches in Washington—ay, (and what was a new thing) in Congress itself, and considering, moreover, that I was endeavoring to bring the members of Congress under the good influence of a cold-water dinner table; I did flatter myself, that I should have the sympathy and commendation of the Temperance press. I confess, that I was not altogether destitute of such reward. Nevertheless, in the case of some of the Temperance newspapers, the reward was overbalanced by complaints of my course on the Nebraska bill. Far different had been their treatment of me, had I been a Whig; and had the Whig press led off in praise, and not in disparagement, of me.

I could not but observe the influence of the Whig press on the religious press also. I carried into Congress the religion of Jesus Christ. My speeches acknowledged its claims, and were imbued with its spirit. Nevertheless, there were few of the religious newspapers to give me their countenance: and some of them relished and repeated the misrepresentations of the Whig press concerning me. Perhaps, however, the unkind aspect of the religious press toward me was not all of Whig influence. I have not, for these twenty years, been an especial favorite with the religious press.

I said, that it was not in respect to the Nebraska bill only, that my Congressional life is complained of. Another cause of complaint, and the only other one I will refer to in this letter, is the remark in my speech on the Mexican Treaty, that I should be willing to have Cuba come to us, "even if she shall not previously abolish her slavery". This remark was the occasion of a fresh onslaught upon me. Many Whig papers were, now, severer than ever upon me: and the National Era and other antislavery papers, which had spared me thus far, could spare me no longer. The Era was, of course, temperate and courteous—for its editor combines with great ability the bearing of a gentleman. There were some antislavery papers, however, which spoke very unkindly, and very coarsely, of me. I had, now, become, in the esteem of such papers an open apostate from the holy cause of freedom. They declared, that I was, no longer, fit to remain in Congress; and that they were glad of the resignation of my seat. The National Antislavery Standard was very ill-natured toward me: and even Mr. Garrison, though he said nothing himself against my much censured position concerning Cuba, consented to copy into his Paper some of the very ugliest things, that were said against it.

But I will delay, no longer, to come to your review of this position. You put the very worst possible construction on it. I am not, altogether, surprised, that you do. The Whig misrepresentations of my course in Congress had prepared the public mind for such construction: and that, notwithstanding your friendship for me, your love of justice and your candor, you should, insensibly, sympathize with that state of the public mind, and be, insensibly, biassed by it, is not strange.

You, totally, misapprehend the position, which you so severely and utterly condemn. I wish that you had, before reviewing it, addressed interrogatories to me, concerning its meaning. Gladly would I have answered them. You will say, that I should have fully explained the position in the speech, in which I took it. Oh, I wish I could have had time to do so! I should have been glad to have consumed a whole day, in doing so—a whole day, in talking to Congress of Human rights, in this connexion. But look at my circumstances, in the case. The Mexican Treaty was up. I got the floor. The debate was confined to two days: and it was, now, the evening of the second day; and a number of speakers were to follow me. No speaker is allowed to exceed an hour. and. in such circumstances, far less than an hour was my full share of the time. Moreover, what I had to say of Cuba was in connexion with the purely incidental topic of the "Monroe doctrine". I could, therefore, but glance at Cuba.

I do not find fault with your position, that there are no conditions (provided slavery has not been previously abolished) on which it is expedient for us and Cuba to be blended into one nation. Perhaps, you are right, in this position. At any rate, as there is not the least probability, that such blending will ever take place on the terms, which I proposed, I am not at all anxious to convince you, or others, that it is expedient, that it should take place. Had you stopped here, I should have had no controversy with you. My judgment I hold as cheap, as you, or any other person, holds it: and I should have felt no promptings of ambition, or pride, to prove, that it was not at fault, in this instance. But you are very far from stopping here. You go on to argue (,and that, indeed is the great aim of your Review,) that I was guilty of a flagrant offence against the Divine law, in consenting to the union of Cuba with this country. So flagrant an offence, as you make it—so obvious an offence, as you make it—I could, hardly, be guilty of, without giving room to call in question my integrity as an abolitionist, and as a christian.

Now, I beg you to lay down this letter, right here; and, after you shall have divorced yourself from the public prejudice against my speech, and abandoned your foregone conclusion, that it must be a very wicked one, you will be prepared to read it, carefully and candidly. So read it—and you will then learn from the speech itself just what I did say: and you will then hold me responsible for that, and not at all for what the newspapers tell you I said; and not at all for your imaginations of what I said. I pause, till you have so read the speech.

And, now, taking it for granted that you have obeyed my request, and learned what my speech really does say about Cuba, you will agree with me

1st. That I am not amenable to the charge of being a *filibuster*:—for I did not propose to get Cuba into the Union, either by whipping her into it, or by buying her into it.

2d. That, so far from my proposing, that the Governments of the two countries should stipulate for the continuance of slavery, I did not so much as propose, that these Governments, or any other Governments, should have aught to do in negotiating the terms of the union. I treated with contempt the idea, that the voice of the Cuban Government is essential in the matter; and I laid down the doctrine distinctly, that, in the dividing of this nation, or in the uniting of it with another, the voice of the Government of this country is not essential.

3d. That the only union of Cuba and this country, which I proposed, was the union of the people of Cuba with the people of this country;—a union dictated by the interest and choice of the two peoples, and to take place, whether Government willed it, or not.

Surely, you ought not to wonder, that, I have here spoken so lightly of the authority of Governments. You have, for many years, known, from my writings and speeches, that I regard these Governments as usurpations, and as conspiracies against human rights, rather than legitimate Civil Governments. The Government of this State, so long as it recognizes property in man, or makes color a disqualification for the enjoyment of rights, merits neither the honor, nor the name of Civil Government.

Surely, too, you ought not to wonder, that, when I speak of the people, I include the enslaved, as well as the free. You were present on the memorable occasion, thirteen years ago, when I reported my "Address to the slaves:" and you, doubtless, recollect, that the great doctrine of the Address is, that men do not cease to be of the people, when they become slaves; and that they forfeit none of their rights by falling under the yoke of slavery. It is true, that you and some other great and good man, who were also present, were so startled by the bold and novel positions of the Address, as to vote against it. But that is a reason, why you should remember, rather than why you should forget, its doctrines.

And, now, my dear friend, is the speech in question the wicked speech, which you thought it to be, when you reviewed it? Is it wicked for the poor slaves of Cuba—the most afflicted and outraged of all slaves—to desire to cast in their lot with our slaves? If it is not, then it is not, necessarily, wicked for freemen to desire it for them. Surely, you will not, because portions of them are so unhappy, as to be reduced to slavery, deny, that peoples may unite with each other. Surely, you will not deny, that their calamity—the bitterest of all calamities—should not be allowed to work the forfeiture of their rights. Surely, you will not consent, that the wrongs against them—the heaviest of all wrongs—shall be plead against their rights. I do not say, that it would be expedient for America and Hungary to enter into an alliance with each other. But I do say, that the fact, that there is oppression in the two countries would not make such alliance necessarily wicked. The alliance may be in spite of such oppression—not in accordance with it. It may be to overthrow—not to sustain—such oppression. If with this object in view, I should favor such alliance, you would not denounce me, as a flagrant offender against Heaven. But as well might you so denounce me in that case, as in the case of my favoring, with the like object in view, the union of Cuba with America. I say, with the like object: and I am sure, that you will not impute to me the opposite object of strengthening the hands of the oppressor.

The doctrine of your Review is, that it is sinful for two nations to become one, so long as there is slaveholding in both, or in either, of them. Admit, that it is so, when the Governments—the Governments, that ordain, and uphold, the slavery—negotiate the union. But the union, which I justify, is to be brought about by the people, and in contempt and defiance of their slaveholding Governments. Admit, too, that it is a sin for the people to accomplish such a union, unless the interests and desires of the slaves are consulted. But when those interests and desires call for it (,and without that I would ever protest against it,) is the union then sin?

To deny, that two peoples may come together, so long, as their usurping Governments are holding a portion of them in slavery, is virtually to hold the unhappy slaves responsible for the devilism of such Governments. Their coming together may be the only hopeful way for the slaves to escape from such devilism, and gain their liberty. But, according to your theory, that way is forbidden to them. So, according to your theory, two peoples may not come together, if any portions of them are oppressed by land-monopoly, nor, indeed, if they are the subjects of any other Governmental wrong.

Strange as it is, it is, nevertheless, so, that, all through your Review, you treat me, not as arguing the right of peoples—even the most oppressed, broken-hearted, and desolate among them—to unite their fortunes and make common cause; but as arguing the right of their usurping Governments to continue their crimes against their subjects. Hence, you interpret me to hold to such a union of Cuba, as shall obligate me, on the score of good faith and consistency, to refrain, ever after the union shall take place, from calling on Government to abolish Cuban slavery. I can but wonder, that you should think me either so ignorant, or so depraved, as to lay myself under such an obligation. The writer in the Free Presbyterian, whom you quote, is even more outspoken, at this point, than you are. As he views the union, which I advocate, my vote for it would, necessarily, expose me to "the charge of collusion with slavery!"

There is nothing in your Review, that I more regret than the part, where you leave me open to the suspicion of hypocrisy. In the speech in question, I anticipated a speedy termination of American slavery. You intimate, that this anticipation is in conflict with my well-known state of mind on that point. I supposed, that you were so familiar with my writings and speeches on that point, as not to forget, that I have, for many years, held that American slavery is short-lived. Those writings and speeches abundantly show, that my despondency in regard to American slavery proceeds, not from my anticipations of its long life, but from my anticipations of its violent death.

I need say no more. The doctrines, which I incidentally glanced at in my speech on the Mexican Treaty have, long, been precious to me; and I have, long, sought to make them precious to my fellow abolitionists. They are doctrines, which I can never surrender, so long, as I continue to recognize in the slave all the fulness of rights, which belongs to any other man, and, so long, as I hold the people superior to the usurpations and conspiracies, which, under the stolen name of Government, have got the control of the people. To have Whigs and Democrats confound these doctrines with the motives of *filibusters*, vulgar politicians, and office-seekers, does, in no degree, surprise me, nor wound my heart, nor disturb my good nature. But I confess, that I do feel grieved—ay, and sometimes indignant—when I find my fellow abolitionists, by whose side I have stood, and suffered, and sacrificed these twenty years, falling into this mistake. I am well aware, that there are narrow-minded abolitionists, as well as narrow-minded other men—abolitionists, who will insist on running all abolitionists into one mould—the same mould of doctrines, thoughts, and words. These are the one-idea abolitionists. Of course, the abolitionist, who thinks for himself—and, that too, on a great variety of subjects—must suffer not a little, when he falls into the hands of such abolitionists, and his character and proportions come under their forcing and stereotyping process. But there are large-minded abolitionists, also: and I am, always, very sad, when I see them allow the spirit of bigotry to invade their noble nature, and transform them into illiberal and uncharitable judges of their fellow abolitionists.

I hope, that both you and the public will pardon this letter. I dislike to appear in defence of myself:—and I, very seldom, do. But incessantly assailed as I am, at every point of my conduct and character—and, that too, by both friends and foes—it seems excusable, that I should, now and then, speak for myself. If, however, I may never defend myself, still may I not, as I have done in parts of this letter, defend great and cherished doctrines, when they are struck at, through myself?

With great regard,

your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

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Petersburg, January 5th, 1855.

Hon. H. C. Goodwin, M. C.

Dear Sir,

I am happy to see, in the proceedings of the House of Representatives, the proposition to take up the Bill for the relief of the sufferers by French spoliations. I am not among these sufferers: and, I do not know, that I have a relative among them. Nevertheless, I deeply desire the success of the Bill. Pardon me for asking you, to inquire into the merits of the Bill, if you have not done so already. I confess, that I am all the more free to take this liberty, not only from the fact, that you represent my Congressional District, but from the fact, that you occupy the seat, which the pressure of my far too extensive private business compelled me to resign.

We must remember the condition of our country in 1778, in order to estimate rightly the value to her of the Treaties, which she made with France, in that year. The American cause was then struggling through its darkest period; and, unless help should come, it could never emerge. Help did come—timely and abundant help. Those Treaties brought it. France joined hands with us. Our liberty was achieved:—and the Americans, like the delivered Jews, "had light and gladness and joy and honor."

But the deliverance of our country did not suffice to fulfil all the obligations of those Treaties. We were bound to France, as strongly as France was bound to us. France had served us: and it was, now, our turn to serve her. But to serve her, as the Treaties required us to serve her, could only be at vast expense to ourselves.

France stood faithfully by us, and expended, in our cause, much blood, and some two or three hundred millions of dollars. But when the hour of her necessities came, we did not stand by her, as our Treaties required us to do. She had abundant cause to complain of us. But I admit, that she, soon after, afforded us as abundant cause to complain of her. She pirated upon our ships, and plundered our commerce. Not ten millions—perhaps not twenty millions—could measure the damage, which she thus did us. It is true, that she committed this crime, under great urgency—under temptations not easily resisted. Europe was combined against her: and she robbed our ships to save herself from starving. It is true, too, that she, always, confessed the crime; and, always, promised reparation, when she should be in circumstances to make it. It is, also, true, that she did provide for it. She provided for it, by releasing us from our obligations to herself, in consideration of our releasing her from the claims of our citizens, whom she had plundered. She ceased to be the debtor of those citizens: and our nation became such debtor, in her stead. Our nation came into this relation, by virtually taking private property to pay a national debt—her debt to France. I do not complain of her for doing so. I complain of her dishonesty, in never paying for this private property. Repeatedly, has she been called on for payment, both by those, who lost the property, and by their children and children's children. Oftentimes, they have come near success. Once, the Bill for their relief passed both Houses of Congress: and the chief reason, if I recollect, why the President vetoed it, was, that we needed all the money in the Treasury for prosecuting our war with Mexico. I trust, that the time has now come, when these petitioners for so long delayed, so obvious, and so needed, justice will succeed in obtaining it.

But there are objections to the payment of the claims in question. The first is, that were the claims valid, they would have been paid, half a century ago. But we must bear in mind the poverty, indebtedness, and various embarrassments of our new-born nation, during the first part of the present century. It was as difficult to pay our debts then, as it is now easy. Moreover, it must not be forgotten, that the principal proofs of the validity of these claims lay undiscovered among the files of the State Department, for some twenty five years. Had these proofs been brought to light, when we had a fresh and strong sense of the much, which France had yielded to us, in return for our exoneration ofher from the demands of our injured citizens, we would have paid these claims, notwithstanding our small ability, at that time, to pay them. In connexion with my reference to the long concealment of the chief proofs of the validity of these claims, I would state, that of the twenty five Congressional Reports on these claims, all, that were adverse to them, were three made during that concealment.

The second objection to the payment of these claims is, that, even if they were valid, they are now quite too old to be acknowledged and paid. Such was the objection, as long ago, as when the chief proofs in question were discovered. Even then the sense of the immeasurable value of what we had received from France had, to a great extent, died out of the public mind. Even then, it was felt to be cheaper to turn the back on these claims than to acknowledge and pay them. But if the age of the claims was so influential an argument against them then, much more influential will it be like to be now, when that age is doubled.

But the argument was not then, nor is it now, entitled to any influence. At the bar of a sound conscience a just claim is never outlawed—never obsolete—never stale. We have been guilty of a very deep wrong, in not paying these claims, long ago. Shall we also be guilty of taking advantage of our own deep wrong, and of making our unjust delay to pay these claims an excuse for disowning them, and casting them aside?

Another objection to the paying of these claims is, that they were provided for under Treaties, subsequent to the Convention of 1800—viz. the Louisiana Treaty; the Florida Treaty; and Rives' Treaty. My answer to this objection is 1st that it is not true: 2d that, if true, nevertheless the Bill provides against paying any of these claims, so far as they are provided for in those Treaties: and 3d that, whether the objection is true or false, the claims have not been paid.

Another objection is, that the claims are in the hands of speculators, who purchased them at a great discount, and, in many instances, for a mere trifle. To this objection I reply 1st that wherever the claims are, we should pay them: 2d that they are not in the hands of speculators, but in the hands of the original claimants, and their descendants, and the Insurance Companies, which lost by the spoliations, and, also, to a small extent, in the hands of those, to whom they were transferred by the operation of bankrupt and insolvent laws: 3d that the Bill provides, that the purchasers of any of these claims shall be allowed no more than they paid for them and the interest on what they paid.

Another objection is, that our Treaties with France were annulled by an Act of Congress in 1798; and that, therefore, at the time of the Convention of 1800, there were no Treaties left to set off against our surrender of the claims of our wronged citizens upon France. But that Act did not have, and did not pretend to have, a retrospective operation. Its language implied the full force of the Treaties up to the time of the enactment, and during most of the spoliations. Again, the Act could have no power to annul the Treaties. It takes as many to unmake a bargain, as it does to make it. Nothing is better settled than that one of the parties to a Treaty is incapable of rescinding it.

I pass on to consider the most relied on objection to paying these claims. It is, that we were at war with France, at, and after, the time, when they accrued; that our Treaties with her were thereby annulled; and that, hence, we had not to purchase satisfaction of the Treaties by undertaking to pay the debts of France, nor by yielding any other consideration. But, in answer to this objection, we say, 1st that we do not admit, that these Treaties could be annulled by war: 2d that we were never at war with France—war never having been declared—general reprisals never having been authorized—the provisions of Congress being expressly operative, only "in case war should break out"—the Courts of the two nations recognizing no war between them, but both holding themselves open to the citizens of both nations: 3d that if the Convention of 1800 did not recognize, and abrogate, the Treaties; nevertheless, as amended by the additional article, in which "the two States renounce the respective pretensions &c." our Government clearly became responsible to satisfy the claims in question: 4th that, even if the Treaties were not in fact binding upon us, nevertheless we certainly did discharge France from those claims, in order, that we might be released from the Treaties; and that, hence, it is not competent for us to devolve on the claimants the loss of our bad bargain. Whether the bargain was good or bad, but for it the claims would have continued to exist against France, and would have been paid by France.

Only one more objection to the payment of these claims remains to be noticed. It is, that the claimants were prosecuting their business—were engaged in their commercial pursuits—at their own risk. But, if it was at their own risk, nevertheless our Government was bound to seek redress for the wrongs and losses, which the claimants suffered. The Government did seek such redress; and it did obtain it. But it proved a faithless agent. Instead of paying over to its principals the indemnity, which it obtained for them, it put that indemnity into its own pocket, and kept it there. Moreover, is it right to say, that the commerce in question was carried on, at the sole risk of the claimants? By no means. There was not only the general obligation of Government to protect, in all such cases;—but, in this case, our Government had especially bound itself to endeavor to get indemnity for losses. At the time it did so, our Government was so poor, as to be vitally interested in the continuance and extension of our foreign commerce. Its empty Treasury was in the most urgent need of the duties on imports. Accordingly, the Secretary of State, Mr. Jefferson, upon the order of President Washington, issued a paper, as early as the year 1793, encouraging our merchants, who had embarked in this business, to face its risks; by promising them the interposition of Government for their safety.

But I will bring my, perhaps, too long letter to a close. We have seen, that the objections to these claims are unreasonable, and, altogether, unworthy of admission. We have seen, that, by every just consideration they should be paid. Does the Bill provide too large a sum for their payment? The sum is far too small. It provides but five millions of dollars, though the claims amount, including interest, to probably thirty or forty millions of dollars. In the year 1800, our Ministers offered a million and a half of dollars to purchase our release from two of the Articles in our Treaties with France. But France would not have sold the release for treble that sum. She did, however, discharge us from all our Treaty obligations to her, in consideration of our discharging her from these claims of our plundered citizens. It is noteworthy, that the million and a half of dollars amount, with the interest thereon, to far more than the Bill proposes we shall pay.

I must not omit to remind you, that the authority of many of the greatest names in our early history—names both of jurists and statesmen—even Marshall and Madison and Jefferson—is on the side of the undoubted justice of these claims.

In the name of justice, of humanity, of decency, let not Congress again turn away these meritorious claimants. If we are not willing to pay them ten millions, let us, at least, be willing to pay them five. Let us pay something on these claims, whilst, as yet, there are grandchildren of the original sufferers to receive it. Most of those sufferers and their immediate descendants have gone down to the grave: and, in many instances, their last years were years of bitter poverty, because of our injustice. I repeat it, let us pay them something, ere not only the original claimants, and their children, but their grandchildren also, shall have passed beyond the reach of our returning sense of justice. Let me here remark, that our Government has provided indemnity, to the amount of many millions, for other French spoliations on our commerce, and for British, and Spanish, and Danish, and other yet spoliations on it. But no provision has it made to relieve the sufferers in this instance. Cruel discrimination!—and as causeless as cruel! I said causeless. It is worse than this—for the claims before us are especially obligatory—are peculiarly sacred.

But it is not alone from regard to the claimants, that we should pay these claims. It is also due to the honor and the heart of France. She inflicted a deep wrong upon many of our citizens. It is true, that, at a great price, she purchased reparation for this deep wrong. But the reparation was never made:—and, until it is, not only will her sense of humanity be pained, but her merit, in purchasing the reparation, will lack its crowning glory. I scarcely need add, that our own nation will be dishonored in the eyes of other nations, until we shall have performed this duty, which France bought us to perform; which, now, whilst our Treasury is overflowing, it is so easy to perform; and which cannot be postponed again, without manifesting a stranger insensibility than ever to the calls of justice and humanity.

Respectfully yours,

GERRIT SMITH.

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Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,

Peterboro, March 13, 1855.

My dear Sir,

For nearly a quarter of a century, I have followed you with deep interest. Your catholic and philanthropic spirit, having a remarkably vigorous and very highly cultivated intellect to serve its generous and elevated purposes, fully justified my large expectations from you. If they have not all been realized, nevertheless many of them have been; and not a few of them most abundantly and delightfully. There are passages in your life of great beauty—of great power—of true sublimity. Were I to single out the one, which most exalted you in my esteem, it would be the identification of yourself with the loathed and execrated William Freeman. Nothing short of a high-souled devotion to the cause of justice can account for that unpopular and self-denying identification.

I have read your late Speech on the Fugitive slave Act. It is emphatically an intellectual Speech. But, if I may say it, without appearing egotistical, it does not, in all respects, come up to my expectations of what would fall from you on such an occasion. The newspapers said so much in praise of it, that I hoped to find you had taken a much higher than your former ground on slavery. But it is much lower than that, which I had supposed you to occupy. I was aware, that you denied to the Federal Government all right to meddle with slavery, except where it has exclusive jurisdiction. But it turns out, that, even there, you allow it scarce the shadow of such a right. You would not have slavery abolished in the District of Columbia, unless the people of the District are willing; and unless, also, the masters are paid "full compensation" for their slaves. A right, clogged with such conditions, is no right.

Honors and reproaches are liberally bestowed upon you for being an abolitionist. But there is, surely, very little reason in such bestowal, if the Speech in question may be relied on to prove the extent of what you would have done toward abolishing slavery. Again, the South, ever and anon, betrays her fears of you. But, very certainly, she need not fear you, if you propose no greater disturbance of her cherished "Institution" than this Speech indicates. Nor, indeed, has she any thing to fear from the mass of abolitionists—for their standard of antislavery action is but little, if any, higher than yours; and, among all their favorites and heroes, there is not one, who enjoys so much of their confidence and admiration, as you do.

Why is it, my dear Sir, that you are willing to go only so short a distance, in the way of delivering the slave? Pardon me for saying, that it seems to be because

1st. Of your false views of law.

2d. Of your false views of human rights.

3d. Of your false views of the province of civil government.

The piratical rules, by which your brother is held in slavery, you dignify with the name of law, and clothe with the obligations and sacredness of law:—and, of course, so long, as you confound these rules with law, you will not consent to trample them under foot, nor to make any very stern demand for the deliverance of their victim. If, instead of regarding law as the protector, and not the destroyer, of rights, your ideal of it is so low, that even the commission of the highest possible crime against man, and the total annihilation of his rights, you can recognize to be law—it necessarily follows, that, with you, there is no glorious and withering majesty of law, before which to arraign slavery, and no mighty voice of law to call for its abrogation.

But your apprehensions of human rights are not less defective than your apprehensions of law. Instead of interpreting constitutions and statutes in the light of human rights, you interpret human rights in the light of constitutions and statutes. You exalt human decrees above human nature: and when they come in collision with each other, it is human nature, that you would have give way, and human decrees, that you would have triumph. The absoluteness of human rights seems to have no place in your conceptions of them. You fall in with the popular notion of subjecting them to conditions—and such degrading and annihilating conditions, as you would scarcely be willing to subject the rights of a dog to. Although man was made but "a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honor", you, nevertheless, claim not one absolute right for him. You admit the enactment, which sweeps away all his rights, to be law—valid law. Alas, nothing is held cheaper than human rights!—nothing is more trifled with than sacred manhood! You would scout the legislation, which declares a stone to be wood, or a horse to be a hog. But the legislation, which sinks man into a chattel—immortality into a commodity—commands your respect and obedience. The simple fact, that it is legislation, outweighs, in your esteem, its infinite absurdity, its infinite insult, and its infinite blasphemy.

That you should be as wide of the truth, in respect to the province of Government, as you are, in respect to law and human rights, is but what might be expected. The only office of Government is to protect, in all the fulness of human rights, every one of its subjects. But you seem to concur with the doctrine of the Supreme Court of the U. States, that Government is competent to do whatsoever it will with its subjects—even to the making slaves of them. Not, indeed, that you would have Government do so—but, that, in its doing so, you would still recognize and obey it as Government. In the case of Strader and others against Graham, that Court says, in defence of reducing freemen to slaves, that a State "has an undoubted right to determine the *status*, or domestic and social condition of the persons domiciled within its territory".

The least right, of which the least of its subjects is robbed, Government should promptly and unconditionally restore. But you allow it to witness unmoved the greatest crime, and to leave unredressed the greatest wrong. You allow it to do so, in the present case, because you recognize a higher power than Government behind the Government. This higher power, to which you would have Government bow—and to which, indeed, you bow—is, strange to say, the criminal himself. You

consent, that Government should emancipate the slaves of the District of Columbia, provided this criminal—this higher power—in other words, the people of the District—are willing. That is, you consent, that Government shall do its duty—its absolute and most commanding duty—whenever they, who are least willing it shall do it, shall give their consent. I admit, that you would promote their willingness by paying them money. But this only makes the matter worse. Government is ever to act upon its own consent—never upon that of another—least of all, upon the bribed consent of another. Let me not be misapprehended, at this point. I would myself have the nation share with the slaveholder in his loss by emancipation—for the nation has encouraged slaveholding, and sought to profit by it. Nevertheless, emancipation, being an absolute duty, is to be granted, free of all conditions. Whether the slaveholder shall receive money, is a question wholly foreign to the duty of emancipation. That duty is to be discharged, whatever may, or may not, follow it.

That you would not have slavery abolished in the States, without "compensation for damages", is not at all strange, since you attach a similar condition to its abolition in the District of Columbia. Nor, since you virtually deny to the Federal Government an unconditional right to abolish slavery, even where it has exclusive jurisdiction, is it at all strange, that you deny, that it has any legitimate concern with slavery in the States.

I need not say, that the Federal Constitution leaves the whole system of American slavery in the hands of the Federal Government. You will yourself admit, that it is not its words, but only their proslavery construction, which teach the contrary. But, whatever this Instrument in this respect, it will have but one interpretation among us, by the time the Federal Government has got heart enough to abolish all slavery within its exclusive jurisdiction:—and that interpretation will accord to it ample power over all American slavery. More than this—the day is not distant, when the Governments of Christendom will agree in regarding slaveholders as *hostes humani generis*—as outlaws, whom they are at liberty to pursue, if need be, across both State lines and Constitutional lines, even as they now pursue pirates, into whatever sea, or lurking-place.

I wonder, my dear Sir, that your self-respect does not forbid your submission to the popular idea, that it lies within the power of Government, as Government, to enslave men. I wonder at your virtual admission, that your own most essential and holy rights, instead of being inherent and absolute, stand but in the concessions and grace of Government. How can you tolerate a doctrine, which would clothe with the name and reverence of law the enslavement of yourself, and wife, and children? I know your hatred of slavery—and that you will say, that a law to enslave men is a bad law. My answer is, that it is no law. I know, that you will say, that such a law should be repealed. My answer is, that it should be trodden under foot.

But we are all apt to deceive ourselves:—and it is possible, that you deceive yourself, when you suppose, that you really regard slavery as law—as law too, which is so sacred and obligatory, as not to be repealable, save on conditions, that are well nigh impossible. Perhaps, after all, were it proposed to make men of Saxon, instead of African, blood the victims of slavery, you would be among the very first to scout the idea of law for the outrage. I think you would be. I think, that, in such case, you would sooner countenance the idea of a law for murder—murder being a less wrong than slavery, as you yourself would decide, were you called on to choose, which should be the fate of your children.

In a former part of my letter, I attributed the superficial character of your antislavery to your erroneous views of law, and human rights, and civil government. But, perhaps, it is only in connexion with *negro* slavery, that you entertain these views. Perhaps, it is only because our slaves are of African blood, that you, who trust, that you are purged of the foul and accursed spirit of caste, can be so patient under their wrongs, and can consent to the interposition of well nigh insurmountable obstacles in the way of the removal of these wrongs. I must believe, that, were a portion of our white brethren to become slaves, you would be exceeded by none, in demanding their instant and unconditional liberty. One thing I most certainly know, and so do you, that were you to propose, or to tolerate, any delay, or any conditions in that case, you would never again be re-elected to the Senate. Your popularity would be all gone—gone forever.

Alas, my deeply insulted black brother! And what is far more lamentable than your insults is, that you, my poor black brother, still hope for help from those, who mean to be, and who believe themselves to be, your friends, and whom you believe to be your friends, but who, nevertheless, make these deeply insulting distinctions against you! May God dispel your delusion. Man cannot. I have, often, seen, and with anguish, that it is too stubborn to yield to the power of man.

The speedy and bloodless end of American slavery is the desire of your heart, as well as of my own. But to seek to accomplish this object by such slender means, as you rely on, is as vain, as to angle for leviathan with childrens' pin-hooks. The power of truth and honesty can alone suffice to overthrow such a deep-rooted, wide-spread, and mighty evil, as is that, which we contend against. But there is no truth in the doctrine, that slavery, which is the most rampant and guilty enemy of law, is itself law. Nor is there honesty in the doctrine—for no one will admit the doctrine, when it is turned against himself, and his own neck is claimed for the yoke of slavery. But strong as is our enemy, our victory, nevertheless, would be sure and easy, would we but consent to discard our superficial and politic expedients, and to call to our aid the weapons of simple truth and simple honesty. Wielding these effective weapons, we could not fail to make a lodgment in the conscience of the slaveholder; nor fail of that inspiring self-respect, which is another powerful element of success; nor fail of what is more than all else—the Divine blessing.

But I must close. Think not, my dear Sir, that I would ignore, or underrate, your services for the slave. You have often uttered good and brave words for him:—very good and very brave, considering how trammeled you are by your connexion with a party, which, if only because it is a national party, must, necessarily, be proslavery. When I ask you to do better things for the slave than you have done, I, notwithstanding, cheerfully and gratefully, acknowledge what you have done for him. I own, that you stand, as an antislavery man, very far above most of our statesmen. But I would have you stand still farther above them. Rejoicing, that you are on comparatively high ground, I, nevertheless, using words of the sacred Book, would say to you affectionately: "Friend, go up higher."

Respectfully and cordially yours,

GERRIT SMITH.

PETERBORO, July 17, 1855.

To the New York Tribune:

I have just read what you say of me in your yesterday's Number.

The press constantly takes great liberties with my name:—but, I believe, the public will bear me witness, that I am patient with these liberties, and do very rarely complain of them. Even with *your* frequent and gross and influential misrepresentations of me I have borne uncomplainingly:—but I can be silent under them no longer.

So you have, at last, been compelled to admit, that I "was present in the House of Representatives on the night of the passage of the Nebraska bill, and voted against it". I wish you had made the admission a year ago. Had you done so, I should probably have been saved the necessity of making a thousand oral and written answers to those, who have questioned me, in respect to my vote on that bill. As it was you, who, more than all others, created the well nigh universal belief, that I was not in the House that night, your early correction of your misrepresentations would, pretty certainly, have done more to dispel such belief than could have been done to that end by all others.

Late, however, as your admission has come, I am nevertheless thankful for it. Overburdened as I am with labors, I rejoice in the prospect, that no more of my time will be consumed in giving such answers, as I have referred to. My more joyful prospect doubtless, in the esteem of some, is that I shall now be restored to good standing, as an antislavery man. But let me here say, once for all, that I care not a farthing for their opinion of my antislavery character, who judge of it by my vote against the Nebraska bill. That was the most popular vote I ever gave; and all the Northern Members, who voted against it, afforded about as much proof, in so voting, of self denial, as they would have done, in submitting to the necessity of eating strawberries and cream. I add, that the credit, which the people give them for "backbone", on account of their having voted against the Nebraska bill, shows that the people have not yet imbibed the first true idea of the brave and stupendous and self-sacrificing work of abolishing American slavery. The only Members of Congress, who, by voting against the Nebraska bill, earned the least part of a title to the reputation of having "backbone", were the few intrepid ones of the South. Indeed, I must insist, that the Northern members, who, in voting for the bill, voted against the aroused Northern sentiment, might far rather be credited with "backbone" than we, who voted with that sentiment.

But no more in regard to my vote on the Nebraska bill. What, it seems, the records of Congress could not establish, the Tribune will, I trust, be found to have established. I trust, that, henceforward, all, who have refused to believe it on the authority of the records of Congress, will, on the authority of the Tribune, believe that I did, indeed, vote against the Nebraska bill. I wish the Tribune would, also, authorize the belief, that I made a speech, as well as cast a vote, against that bill. And I wish this so strongly, that I now tell it to draw on me for three hundred dollars ($300,) in case it shall consent to put that speech into the hands of its one hundred and fifty or two hundred thousand subscribers. Possibly in this speech—the only one ever made in Congress to prove, that slavery is both a piracy and an outlaw—an abomination, which never has been law, and which never can be law—there may be found some little evidence of that "backbone," which your columns have repeatedly charged me with lacking.

And, now, that you have ceased to misrepresent me on one point, and have confessed, that I really did vote against the Nebraska bill, I hope you will travel on a little further in the way of justice, and not let your relentings cease, until you have confessed your deep wrong against me on another point also.

All others put together have not done so much, as you have done, to give currency to the report, that whilst in Congress, I was guilty, not only of deserting the cause of freedom, but of deserting it for the sake of the petty self-indulgence of saving a few hours of sleep. To the facts in the case.

When the time had arrived for taking the vote on the Nebraska bill, its opponents proposed to combine for the purpose of preventing the taking of it. In other words, they believed, that there was now an occasion, which would justify them in blocking the wheels of government, and in unfurling the flag of revolution, even on the floor of Congress. I dissented from them. Yes, I had even "backbone" enough to stand *alone* in my dissent. The argument, which I employed with my excellent friends Chase and Sumner and with other Members of Congress to justify this dissent, contained not one word on the subject of my sleep. The substance of it I shortly after gave to my constituents, in a printed letter; and you commented on it. That argument you were bound to receive, as my own justification of my course; and you had no right for the purpose of making me ridiculous, or for any other purpose, to substitute for it the coinage either of your own, or of any other body's, fancy. Here follows a copy of the argument.

"I refused to become a party to the plan for preventing the taking of the vote on the Nebraska bill. This refusal was a great grief to the abolitionists in both Houses of Congress: and I scarcely need say, that I love them too well not to grieve in their grief. Nevertheless, I had to persist in the refusal, and in standing alone. The wisest of men and the best of men, entreated me, over and over again, by my regard for my reputation, and by all, that is precious in the cause of freedom, not to persevere in this singularity. Nevertheless—and, that, too, notwithstanding obstinacy had never been imputed to me—I was immovable. How could I be moved, when it was my convictions, that fastened me to my position? Years before, in the calm studies of my secluded home, I had adopted the democratic theory—not nominally and coldly and partially—but really and earnestly and fully: and the conclusions, which I had arrived at, in circumstances so favorable for arriving at just conclusions, I was entirely unwilling to repeal, in a season of excitement and temptation. I spoke of the democratic theory. But the soul of that theory is the majority principle. Hence, to violate this principle is to abandon that theory. I was, frequently, told, that those rules of the House, in the expert use of which the taking of the vote on the Nebraska bill could be staved off indefinitely, were made for the very purpose of enabling the minority to hold the majority at bay, whenever it might please to do so. But this did not influence me. For, in the first place, I could not believe, that they were made for so wrongful—for so anti-democratic—a purpose: and, in the second place, even had I thus believed, I, nevertheless, could not have consented to use them for that purpose. There is no rule—nay, there is no enactment, however solemn or commanding, that I can consent to wield against the all-vital and sacred majority principle; or, in other words, against democracy itself.

When I complained, that the plan in question was revolution, I was charged with inconsistency;—inconsistency with my well known readiness to rescue a fugitive slave. It is true, that I would rescue a fugitive slave. Nevertheless, I felt not the pertinence of the charge of inconsistency. In rescuing him, I take my stand outside of the Government, and am a confessed revolutionist. Let it be remembered, that it is only, whilst and where, I am inside of the Government, that I acknowledge myself bound to bow to the will of the majority. I bow to it in the legislative hall and in the court room; and everywhere and always do I bow to it; until the purposed *execution* of the decree, that is intolerable. Then I rebel. They are guilty of anticipating the only proper time for rebellion, who resort to it, during the process of legislation. I sit in the House of Representatives, and hear my fellow members discuss, and see them vote upon, a bill, which wrongs me greatly. Argument and persuasion and my vote are all, that I can, legitimately, oppose to its passage. If it pass, and its enforcement be contemplated, it will be, then, for me to decide whether to rebel against the Government, and to resist the enforcement.

I need say no more, in explanation, or defence, of my grounds for refusing to go into the scheme to prevent the majority from bringing the House to a vote on the Nebraska bill. I will, however, before leaving this subject, advert to the fact, that for refusing to go into this scheme—into this physical struggle, which continued through thirty-five successive hours—into this strife to see which party could go the longer, without sleeping, and eating, and, I would that I could add, without *drinking* also—my reputation for fidelity to the antislavery cause has suffered not a little, in some quarters. Moreover, it is not only in this wise, that I suffered loss by refusing to follow the multitude on that occasion. My reputation for a sound understanding, poor as it was before—and poor as that of every radical and earnest abolitionist must continue to be, until abolition shall be in the ascendant—is far poorer now. It is, I suppose, for my singularity on that memorable occasion, that a very distinguished and much esteemed editor tells the world, that I am 'deficient in common sense.' I am happy to believe, however, that this editor will readily admit, that it is far better to be 'deficient in common sense' than in common honesty: and that, when he shall have read this letter, he will clearly see, that, with my views of the comprehensive and sacred claims of the majority principle, I could not have gone into the combination in question, and yet have retained common honesty. I was a fool in this editor's esteem not to go into it. But he will, now, perceive, that I would have been a rogue, had I gone into it. He will, now, be glad, that I did not go into it. For much as he values knowledge, he values integrity more. And were he, now, to meet me, he would press my hand, and thank me, that I played the fool, in preference to playing the rogue.

By the way, will not this editor allow me to remind him, that when, a little more than three short years ago, I went into different parts of our State to speak against certain Senators for their daring to prevent the necessary majority of the Senate from passing the Canal bill, he had no censures, but rather praises, to bestow on me? It is true, that he and I both desired the success of the Canal bill; and that we both desired the defeat of the Nebraska bill. And it is true, therefore, that, whilst my principles worked for his and my interests and wishes in the former case, they worked, (at least, as some thought,) against them, in the latter. Was this, however, a good reason why I should not allow them to work in the latter, as well as in the former case? I ask this editor—I ask the world—how it was possible for me to fall in with this policy of preventing the vote on the Nebraska bill, unless I was also prepared to revoke my condemnation of the like policy on the part of the Senators, to whom I have referred."

Now, *I* do not say, that this argument, which I have here copied, was sound. I leave it for *you* to say it:—and you will say it, on the very first occasion you shall have for saying it. It is not improbable, that, within a few years, the opponents of slavery will be in the majority in both Houses of Congress. Then they will undertake to repeal so much of the Nebraska bill, as repeals the compromise line; and they will, also, undertake to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. But the advocates of slavery, pleading for their precedent the revolutionary movement for preventing the vote on the Nebraska bill, will resort to a similar movement. The Tribune will, of course, denounce the factious, rebellious, anarchical conduct—and, in denouncing it, will fulfil my prediction, and virtually indorse my argument. In vain, however, will it be for the Tribune to denounce that in its foes, which it justified in its friends. Then, too, many a one, who was in Congress with me, and who, in his zeal against the Nebraska bill, forgot what was due to the great democratic majority principle and to the dignity of a legislature, will clamor against others for doing the very thing, which they had themselves done—for playing a game, which one has as good right as another to play. These gentlemen will, however, avail nothing by their clamor but to be laughed at for their impudent inconsistency. In that day, mine will be the only rebuking and healthful example—unless, indeed, as I, this moment, think was the fact, there were two or three democratic members, who, though voting against the bill, did not go into the combination to prevent the taking of the vote upon it.

But what as to the foundation for all the fun—and some of it very ill-natured, not to say malignant fun—which you and others have made of my going to bed at 9 o'clock? It is true, that it is my habit to go to bed at that early hour, and it is also true, that I do not admit that I am at all the worse for the habit, physically, intellectually, or morally. But when, or where, have I plead this habit, as an excuse for any part of my conduct on the Nebraska bill? Never—no where. It is true that I have occasionally said, that the physical struggle, which the Members went into, could, no more than does a duel, decide which party is with the right. It is true, that I have occasionally said, that if questions in Congress are to be decided by such a struggle, men of the physical qualities and habits for such a struggle, however weak or wicked they may be, are the proper men to send to Congress. It is true, that I have occasionally said, that, such being the mode for disposing of questions in Congress, I, who get sleepy at 9 o'clock, and who have conscience against keeping myself awake by drinking a glass of rum every hour, am the last man to send to Congress. It is true too, that I said much against night sessions of Congress; and that I sat very uneasy in the midst of the gross drunkenness, which abounded in the Hall, the night of the voting on the Nebraska bill. But I put it to your discrimination and conscience, whether, in saying all this, I said, that I valued my sleep more than I did the cause of freedom, and that sooner than not be in bed at 9 o'clock, I would fail to record my vote against the Nebraska bill. Is it not a very glaring perversion of my words, of which you have been guilty?

I am amazed, that you can find it in your heart to persevere in these utterly groundless and wicked misrepresentations of me. You are not a stranger to my services for the slave; and you know how base and absurd is the charge, that I, who, for his sake, have, in every hour of the night, faced the howling tempest, and have, also, for his sake, repeatedly faced the howling mob, should, at last, be found making more account of a few hours sleep than of my solemn duties to the cause of liberty. And, yet, you continue to tell the world not only, that I am guilty of this entirely incomprehensible and exceedingly criminal inconsistency, but that I confess, that I am. Whatever may be your opinion of my argument for declining to be a party to the device for staving off the vote on the Nebraska bill, I am sure, that you believe in your heart, that there was no man, either in or out of Congress, who would have made greater sacrifices than I to defeat the bill.

Since I see you are determined to keep afloat the slander, that I was not willing, ay, and that I did myself declare that I was not willing, to sit up after 9 o'clock, even for the high duty of standing sentinel for freedom, I do not a little wonder, that you should admit, that I voted on the passage of the Nebraska bill. For, in order to vote on it, I had to be in the Capi-

tol, until between 11 and 12 o'clock at night—perhaps quite 12. Yes, to be certain of not failing to vote on it, I had to be in my seat not only all day, but until about the hour of midnight.

I said, that I was amazed at your continuing to wrong me. I admit, that you are tempted to it: and I am willing, in making up my estimate of your guilt, to make all just allowance for the force of the temptation. I know, that you are tempted to hope, that, by showing my type of antislavery to be unreliable and worthless, you will succeed in destroying public confidence in the whole class of technical and radical abolitionists, and in winning favor for your own sort of antislavery—that half and half, now here and now there sort, which will, one month, study its interests by swelling out into big words against slaveholders, and which will study them, the next month, in being as busy as a bee to seduce the dupes of those big words to vote for Henry Clay, or some other slaveholder. In the light of what I have here said, your abuse of me, whilst I was in Congress, and your abuse of me ever since, is no mystery. And yet, after mitigating your offence by every proper allowance for your temptation to the offence, I am constrained to say, that, had there been magnanimity, though ever so little, among the elements of your character, it would have sufficed to overcome the temptation to fall upon a man like myself—yes, even a much stronger temptation than that to which you have yielded. For I am a man, who has no hold on the public favor; and who is, always and every where, spoken against, ridiculed, reviled. I have no party, no press, no means for defending myself. The meanest Whig, or Democrat, or Sectarian, from the fact, that he has a party and a press to help him, can succeed in starting any, even the most extravagant, lie respecting me. Ay, the very abolitionists will believe it:—for the poor credulous, simple souls have not yet faith enough in each other to shut their ears to lies about each other. The New York Tribune, with its imposing pretensions to candor, can gull them to any extent it pleases. To gain an unjust victory over an isolated, helpless man like myself is indeed very easy, very temptingly easy:—but is it not as ungenerous and mean, as it is easy?

I notice with what contempt you speak in your yesterday's editorial of my brief Congressional life. All I have to reply is, that I did what I could, whilst in Congress, by my lips and my life, to serve the interests of freedom, and temperance, and peace, and humanity, and religion; and that for having done so, I should, however small my intellect or influence, have been respected, and not despised, by you—commended, and not calumniated.

I would send this manuscript to you, were it not, that you have, within the last week, refused to print some twenty or thirty lines, which I sent you, in reply to an attack upon me in your columns. Since you refused to print those few lines, you would, of course, refuse to print these many lines. Should you, however, consent to reprint this letter, I will cheerfully pay your charge for doing so:—and none the less cheerfully, because of any ill-natured comments, with which you may see fit to accompany it. No comments in the case can change the facts in the case. The facts, unchanged and unchangeable, will live, to break through and scatter all the clouds, which you have succeeded in collecting upon my reputation, and to work out, in the end, my perfect and triumphant vindication. They will live too, to stamp broader and broader, deeper and deeper, disgrace upon you, until you shall have completed the retractions, which you have, at last, found yourself compelled to begin, and until you shall have confessed your sorrow and shame for having yielded to the temptation to slander one, who, not only has no advantages for defending himself, but who has shown himself to be both patient under wrongs, and unwilling to inflict them.

GERRIT SMITH.

SECOND LETTER OF GERRIT SMITH TO THE NEW-YORK TRIBUNE.

PETERBORO, July 31, 1855.

To the New York Tribune:

I have but just now returned home, after a week's tour in behalf of our Maine Law—that excellent Law, which you are defending so ably and so influentially. This accounts for a day's delay in thanking you for publishing my long letter to you. It was manly in you to publish it; and it will be manly in you to publish this also.

The editorial, with which you have seen fit to accompany my letter, does, I confess, both surprise and grieve me. It has made bad worse. You have but multiplied your wrongs against me, instead of blotting out, by the repentance I had hoped for, both the effect and the sin of those wrongs, which you had previously inflicted on me.

Let us first, however, to your allegation, that I have wronged you. You hold, that I "broadly sin against the truth," in charging you with being the chief and most responsible propagator of the calumny, that I did not vote on the Nebraska bill. So far are you from confessing the truth of this charge, as virtually to claim, that your columns have vindicated me from the calumny. This claim cannot fail to astonish your readers:—for they have all believed, and believed it too because they were your readers—that I did not vote on the Nebraska bill. Moreover, they have all believed, that why I did not vote on it was because, in my low self-indulgence, I preferred sleep to duty. I will not deny, that you "published most prominently at the time" my vote on the bill, provided your copying the record of the whole affirmative and negative vote deserves to be so characterized. But whence comes it, that in spite of your doing so, your readers, including even the abolitionists—the forever silly, because forever Whig-cheated abolitionists—have, all along, believed, that I did not vote on the bill? Of course, it comes from the fact, and most naturally too, that you have spoken, so expressly and strongly, against my antislavery integrity, and that you have, also, repeatedly spoken in ways, which, to say the least, imply, that I did not vote on it. All this necessarily had the effect, both to prevent and to erase, so far as my name was concerned, any impression, which your record of the vote was calculated to make. For all this, when it did not have the effect to lead your readers to assume, that my name was not in the record, did have the effect to wear out their recollections of having seen it there. Doubtless, the New York Herald did, also, publish the vote on the Nebraska bill. But, inasmuch as that Paper represented me as having gone over to slavery, and as being engaged in purchasing a Southern plantation and in stocking it with slaves, they, who believe what they find in its columns, were not very like either to receive, or to retain, the impression, that I, a fresh convert to slavery, voted against the Nebraska bill. Now, your readers believe you, perhaps even more than the readers of the Herald believe it. Hence, when they were reading in your columns—ay, in your very editorials—at the time of the agitation in Congress on the Nebraska bill, that I was giving signs of utter apostacy from the cause of the slave, and that the slaveholders, having covered me all over with the slime of their flattery, were about swallowing me entire, it is not at all strange, that the mere fact of my name's being in the record of the vote on the bill should have little or no influence upon them.

But I have not done with defending myself against your charge, that I have wronged you, in holding you up as my principal calumniator in the case in hand. About the first day of the present month, the base charge, with unusually base accompaniments, that I was not present at the taking of the vote on the Nebraska bill, appeared in your columns. On the 16th instant you retracted the charge. But you know, that, to this day, you would not have done so, had you not been compelled to it by my prompt denial of the charge. That denial you refused to publish: and even the miserable thing, which you gave to your readers in its stead, was not published, until you had given the slander a full fortnight, in which to send its poison through the public veins.

So much for your charge of my having wronged you. I have shown how entirely baseless it is. It will never be renewed by you, unless, indeed, you shall come to surpass even yourself in draughts upon the popular credulity. And, now, to your fresh wrongs against myself.

1st. You seek to cover over your gross injustice to me by declarations of your uniform "kindness" and "tenderness" to my "errors" and "weaknesses". That I am an erring and weak man, and that, as such, I greatly need "kindness" and "tenderness" at the hands of my fellow men, is cheerfully admitted by me. Nevertheless, there is one thing, which I need even more than "kindness" and "tenderness". It is justice. Justice I must have. I can accept no substitute for it. If you will give me that, I will be content, even though you shall not add the grace of "kindness" and "tenderness". But pray what do you mean by your professions of "kindness" and "tenderness" toward me? If but irony, or a mere joke, I make no complaint. But if you intended to have them taken literally, and as sincere, then are they the most impudently false professions, which I have ever known.

2d. You cheapen my letter to you by representing it to be the fruit of an uncontrollable temper. I admit, that the words of an angry man are entitled to all the less consideration for his being an angry man. I think, however, I can safely say, that if I have ever disgraced my manhood by exhibitions of anger, not my neighbors, nor even my family, know it.

3d. You couple with my name eccentricities and "monomania"; and I confess, that I am sorry you do. Desiring deeply, that my efforts in aid of the great and good objects, which I cherish, may tell as far as possible, I am always pained, when I see them crippled by encountering the public suspicion, that I am an eccentric and insane man. I had begun to hope, that, as Temperance and Freedom were getting so well advanced among us, I should soon be entirely exempt from this suspicion. I speak of Temperance and Freedom—since it was not until I became a Temperance man, that any one did so much as hint, that I am eccentric, and since it was not until I became an abolitionist, that I was ever called a madman. I was well aware, that I might have saved my reputation for common sense and sanity, had I consented to be a more moderate, or somewhat qualified, Temperance man and abolitionist. But it still seems to me (,perhaps, however, only because I am still eccentric and insane,) that I should, in that case, have been a less consistent, and as time would prove, a less useful friend of Temperance and Freedom.

There are many facts in my Temperance and Abolition history, that have favored the charge of my being eccentric and mad. The fact, that, although it is nearly thirty years, since I espoused the cause of Temperance, I have never, since I espoused it, allowed myself to vote for any man for the office of Supervisor, or Justice of the Peace, until I had first ascertained, that

he would refuse to license the sale of intoxicating drinks, has favored this charge. The fact too, that, for more than twenty years, and even as far back, as when my immediate emancipation (I was always an immediate emancipationist,) was clogged by my colonization, I came under the conviction—a conviction immediately translated into practice—that, among the supplies of my family, there ought to be none—no cloth, no rice, no sugar, no cotton—that are wet with the tears and sweat and blood of the poor toiling and unpaid slave—that fact, too, gave countenance to the charge of my being an eccentric and crazy man.—I believe, however, that the day will come, when such facts will be regarded as perfectly consistent with a *rational* opposition to drunkenness and slavery. Another fact, which favored this charge, is, that, at a very early day, I became persuaded, that not only no slaveholder, however intellectual or amiable he may be, is capable of representing my views of civil government, but that no non-slaveholder is, whose views of civil government can be represented by a slaveholder. Out of this persuasion grew my motto: "Vote for no slaveholder, and for no one, who does vote for a slaveholder":—a motto, which, as it proscribes all Whigs and Democrats, brings me under the disfavor of all Whigs and Democrats. This motto I have never failed to honor at the ballot-box. Hundreds of thousands of voters will, I believe, honor it, ere long. I wish you might be among them, instead of neutralizing your testimony against slavery by admitting, every now and then, that you would vote for a slaveholder. Possibly, the clearer light, which shall reveal to you the reasonableness of the motto, will also reveal to you the reasonableness of many other things in my life, which have passed with you for eccentricity and madness. Pardon me, if these lines shall, like some in my former letter, savor, in your esteem, of self-laudation. I loathe self-laudation: but my loathing of it shall not deter me from self-defence.

4th. The way is now prepared for me to take up the principal one of the fresh wrongs you have done me. I call it the principal one, because it is an imputation upon my ingenuousness and veracity. I addressed a letter to my constituents. It was both written and published in Washington, and not, as you represent, at my home. In one part of the letter I present my reason for refusing to join with the minority to prevent the taking of the vote on the Nebraska bill. This reason was, that the minority has no right to baffle and control the majority. In my letter to you I set this forth as my only reason. You say, that I had another reason also; and you add, that I avowed it in my letter to my constituents. This other reason for not joining the minority is, as you declare, that to join it would interfere with my bedtime. And now to the trial of this issue. Hear first my argument, that I had but the one reason, which I stated in my letter to you; and then we will hear yours, that, in my letter to my constituents, I confessed, that I had one more.

1st. My antecedents—especially what I spoke and wrote on the subject of our Senators' refusing to vote on the Canal bill, and on their withdrawing from the Senate Chamber—prove, that I had but to be consistent with my own theory of civil government, in order to refuse to go into the combination for staving off the vote on the Nebraska bill. These antecedents also prove, that my earnestness, in behalf of this theory at this point, needed no additional considerations to induce me to carry it out.

2d. *There* are the Members of Congress, who urged me to go into the combination. Ask Senators Chase and Sumner, or any other of them, whether they ever heard me give a reason for not going into the combination other than that, which I gave in my letter to you. *There* too are the gentlemen out of Congress, who argued the case with me. Ask Preston King, or any of them, whether they ever heard me give any other reason. They will all reply, that I gave no other.

3d. Look at the recorded proceedings of Congress. They show, that I was opposed on principle to the combination in question—for they show, that I voted against the devices to consume time and prevent the taking of the vote on the bill. There is the record of my votes on the side of the proslavery majority. Yes, this record shows that I sat, and voted with that guilty majority. Publish, if you please, in the most strongly condemnatory terms, that I was found, in that memorable struggle, in proslavery company—in the company of men, who were guilty of one of the most stupendous and atrocious swindlings ever known. Hold me up, if you please, to everlasting detestation for all that;—for all that is true. Only do not persist in telling of me, what is not true.

4th. There is my letter to my constituents. It speaks for itself. It gives but one reason for my refusing to join the minority in trampling on the rights of the majority. In using such language, I mean no reproach on the minority. They acted out their conscience, and I mine. They thought, that they were upholding rights, whilst I thought, that they were trampling on rights.

We come, now, to your argument for showing, that I avowed, in my letter to my constituents, two reasons for not combining with the minority on the occasion referred to. That I may be certain of doing you no injustice, I will copy the whole of your argument on this point.

"By way of justifying himself and disproving that his hour of going to bed had anything to do with his absence from the Nebraska struggle, Mr. Smith quotes a long passage from an address to his constituents published on his return from Washington and duly copied in the Tribune at the time. In this extract his absence is put exclusively on the ground of principle. The course of the minority in resisting the bill seemed to him wrong and he refused to join in it. This was all right; had he urged no other ground we might have thought him mistaken, but must have respected his fidelity to his conviction. But this was not all. In a part of the very same address, which in the present objurgatory letter he takes care to omit, he used the following words in reference to a letter of his which had been published:

'*In leaving the Nebraska bill, I will briefly refer to the censures which have been cast on one of my private letters. The whole or none of that letter should have been printed. I was sorry to see disjointed parts of it in print. The letter is not before me; but I remember that I spoke in it against night sessions of Congress, and declared that had the hour of three in the morning been appointed for taking the vote on the Nebraska bill, I should not have been present.*'

The passage of the private letter above referred to was as follows:

'*Suppose our House had appointed three o'clock in the morning as the hour for taking the final vote on the Nebraska bill. I should not in that case have given my vote, for I should have felt it to be my duty to be in bed at that hour. On whom would rest the responsibility of my absence and my missing vote? Some of my friends would say upon myself; but I would say on the House.*'

Now, we submit that in view of these declarations it is rather difficult to understand the warmth of excitement with which Mr. Smith now repels the idea that he was absent from that memorable struggle because he wanted to be in bed. He here admits that while on principle he was opposed to joining in the battle waged in the House, he was also opposed to it because it interfered with his bed-time."

Now, I submit, whether, in your zeal to convict me of insincerity, you have not entirely confounded one subject with another. Neither the passage you extract from the private letter, nor that you extract from the letter to my constituents, says one word about the "memorable struggle", in which the majority tried to bring the House to a vote on the Nebraska bill, and the minority tried to stave off the vote. Both of these passages refer to *the taking of the vote* on the Nebraska bill.

You see your blunder. Men, as able and logical as you are, have been guilty of blunders. Some of them have been magnanimous enough to confess them, and some have not. With which of the two classes you shall identify yourself remains to be

proved. You ventured to impeach my veracity. I have triumphantly vindicated it. You would, perhaps, consult your popularity by refusing to publish, or to admit, the vindication. But I hope you will prefer to honor yourself and to honor human nature, even though it shall be at the expense of your popularity.

But although the extracts, which you made, do entirely fail to convict me of any degree of insincerity or falsehood, for the reason that they do not apply to the subject, which, in your haste, you took it for granted that they did apply to, there is, nevertheless, another direction also, in which you use the extracts against me. You use them to prove, that, in a certain event, I would, by my own admission, have failed to vote on the Nebraska bill. I admit, that they prove it. What, however, has this to do with your former charges against me? These charges regarded what I actually did in actual circumstances. But, now, you arraign me for conjecturing (it could be conjecturing only) what I should do in certain supposable circumstances. You are ungenerous. Since I did vote in the actual case, you should be ready to forgive my after suppositions, however foolish, that, in an imagined contingency, well nigh impossible to occur, I should refuse to vote. I do not recollect how I came to suppose this 3 o'clock case. It probably was to illustrate the absurdity of entering upon a physical struggle, which was to keep Members of Congress from their tables and beds for weeks, ay for months—for, when it was entered upon, it was a common boast, that it should be protracted for at least six months, if not indeed until the expiration of that Congress in March 1855.

It occurs to me from your language, that you would have it understood, that had the vote on the Nebraska bill not been taken until after 3 o'clock, I would have left the House before the taking of it. My letter to my constituents shows, that I meant no such thing. I had in my mind the outrage and wickedness of appointing, the day beforehand, or days beforehand, a session at an hour so unseasonable, that some would be too feeble, and none would be fit, to attend it. You intimate, that, with a dishonest intent, I forbore to quote from my letter to my constituents what it must now be abundantly evident to you there was no occasion whatever to quote. I, in my turn, do now charge you with omitting to quote from it that, which would have explained to my advantage and vindication what I meant in the part, you did quote. I will, however, supply your omission, and quote what is necessary to serve the cause of truth, at this point.

"I might dwell on many objections to giving my countenance to this three o'clock appointment. I will detain you with only a few of them; and with but a glance at these. 1st. Some members of Congress are, either from age or other causes, too feeble to be compelled, unless in a case of absolute necessity, to leave their beds, at such an unusual hour for leaving them. 2d. At this sleepy hour, few persons are in a state for the wise and safe transaction of important business. 3d. As the friend of temperance, both my lips and example shall ever t stify against any night-session of Congress, that is not called for by the clearest necessity. What if the majority had appointed the taking of the vote on the Nebraska question, in a dramshop?—Would you have had me present? I trust not.

But, I shall, perhaps, be told, that were it, once, understood, that the friends of temperance, and decency, and good hours, refuse to appear in Congress, the latter part of the night; advantage would be taken of the refusal, and that part of the night would be chosen for mischievous and wicked legislation. This supposes two things, however, neither of which, I trust, is supposable. It supposes, 1st, that a majority of the members of Congress would be guilty of such an outrage; and, 2d, that the people would be patient under it. Had the Nebraska bill been passed by calling us from our beds at three o'clock, the people would have seen, in this disgraceful fact, another and a strong reason for condemning this bill and its supporters."

I trust, that your readers will not construe my words to mean, that I would not have gone to a 3 o'clock in the morning-session, for the sake of *defeating* the Nebraska bill. I suppose that, for that purpose, I would have gone to a session at any hour. I voted on it not to defeat it—for it was made manifest some days before, that it would pass by a decided majority. I voted on it for the purpose of recording my name against a perfidious and high-handed assault on the cause of freedom. The voting on the bill "simply recorded", as you rightly say, in your editorial of 16th instant, "a foregone conclusion". Let me add in this connexion, that no man was more determined than myself not to fail to cast his vote on the bill; and that no man was more careful than myself not to miss the opportunity to do so. It is true, that, during the "memorable struggle," I did not remain in the House, as many Members did, for the purpose of preventing the taking of the vote on the Nebraska bill:—but it is, also, true, that I did remain there, and with as few intermissions as they, watching for the time, when the bill should be put to vote—a time, which might come in any hour of the day or night.

Just here I would say something of this "private letter", from which you have quoted. It was fair in you to quote from it what you did—for I had myself indorsed this much of it in a public letter—in my letter to my constituents. But there are newspapers, especially those little cur newspapers, so proud in their habit of biting at my heels, that quote other parts of it also, for the purpose of damaging me. These newspapers quote from it to prove, that my reason for refusing to go into the struggle to prevent the taking of the vote on the Nebraska bill was, that I would not consent to change my bedtime. Now, in the extracts from it, which I have seen, there is but one sentence, and that a short one, which speaks of this struggle. Moreover, that sentence was followed by * * *. The whole of the sentence is: "I declined entering into the physical strife—into the question, which party could do the longest without eating or drinking". But even if there were any thing in these extracts, which might seem to make against my declaration—that I assigned but the one reason, which I declare I assigned, for not going into the combination to stave off the vote—I should still deny the right to quote the extracts against such declaration. 1st. Because, as there are abundant unequivocal proofs to show what was my reason for refusing to enter the combination, it would be illogical, unphilosophical, absurd to turn away from these to such, as are exceedingly scanty and uncertain. I am known to hold to the anti-slavery construction of the Federal Constitution. How unreasonable it would be to quote, in the face of the decisive proofs to this end, the few lines in one of my private letters, that might seem to look in an opposite direction! 2d. The extracts should not be used against me, because they are extracts from a private letter—a private letter too, that was evidently written in haste and in a playful spirit. 3d. Extracts from a letter do not prove even its general, much less its precise, tenor and drift. How far these disjointed extracts would be modified by the unprinted parts of the letter, I do not know, for I took no copy of it. 4th. It is important, in order to interpret this letter safely, to know what were the questions put in the letter, to which it was an answer. (I remember them but very generally and very uncertainly.)

But I need say no more of the private letter in question. Indeed, so far as our controversy is concerned I did not need to say any thing of it—for you were at full liberty to quote from it what you did:—your only error, at this point, consisting in your assumption, that the quotation referred to one subject, when, on the very face of it, it refers entirely to another.

My argument is ended. You find fault with my rhetoric. I find fault with your facts. I am a plain man, and I care and know comparatively little about rhetoric. But I love honesty, and, therefore, do I make great account of facts. It is because you wronged me in your facts, that I had to take up my pen. If it is in my rhetoric only, that I have wronged you, then is the balance largely against you.

I need not tell you, that you are worsted in our controversy. You have too much sense not to know it, and too much

pride not to feel it. But you have no right to complain of the result. Your readers will bear me witness, that I went into the controversy very reluctantly. You had to keep pushing me for nearly a year and a half, before you finally succeeded in pushing me into it.

"Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel: but being in
Bear it, that the opposer may beware of thee."

We both know, and equally well, that I obeyed the former of these two injunctions of the great poet. Whether I have obeyed the latter also, you know better than I.

The "errors", "weaknesses", "eccentricities", "excessive passion" or "monomania", which you attribute to me, have, doubtless, had not a little to do in encouraging you to select me as the person, on whom to vent your ill humors, and practice your weapons of ridicule and detraction. From the return blows of one so crazy, so foolish, so impotent, as you had pictured me to be, you, of course, felt, that there was nothing to fear. Sorry, however, as is the plight, in which this controversy leaves you, it, nevertheless, is not without its important instructions to you; and so far, therefore, you may console yourself, that the controversy is not all less to you. Ever hereafter, you will know, ay keenly feel, how exceedingly unsafe it is to judge, in the light of the disparaging and bad names, which you have yourself put upon your opponent, of the measure of his ability to defend himself against your assaults. Ever hereafter, you will be entirely convinced, that a man is not necessarily the poor thing, which it has suited your fancy and your interest to represent him to be. Now, such instruction would be worth something to any body. It is especially valuable to you, who seem to have been so remarkably destitute of it.

I observe, that you say nothing of my proposition to have you print the Speech, which I made in Congress on the Nebraska bill. I am very desirous, that you should show your readers what words I was dropping into the ears of slaveholders, at the very time, when you were making those readers believe in my suppleness to slaveholders, and in my base desertion of the antislavery cause. My offer of $300 for your compensation was perhaps not enough. Hence, I extend it to $500. Your rule to receive pay for advertisements only shall not be in the way of your publishing the Speech;—for you may class it with advertisements, and yet have the $500. Any way you please:—only get it before the readers of your columns.

I observe, too, that you make no argument to show, that I am wrong in denying to the minority the right to control the majority. I add, that you never will, ay never can, make an argument to that end. The passion and prejudice of the moment may drive the minority into an attitude so unwarranted and false. But as long as democracy itself shall remain a truth—and that will be ever—so long also will the right of the majority to vote down the minority remain a truth.

I close with thanking you for your wish, that I may live long to improve myself. Be assured, that I reciprocate the kind and generous wish—and that I do so all the more cordially, because you are in such especial need of improvement.

GERRIT SMITH.

Aug. 22, 1855

17th Copies

Petersburg, August 22d, 1855.

EDWARD C. DELAVAN, Esquire,

My dear friend,

I will write you a few pages on subjects, which have interested us, in some of our conversations with each other.

Government is a mighty educator of the people. Perhaps, it should not be. Perhaps, in a better coming day, it will not be. Perhaps, the school and the church and other educating powers will, yet, leave little room for government to mould the character of the people. Nevertheless, it is true, that, thus far in the world's history, government has had no small share in forming the popular mind.

That all men should betake themselves to a higher than a human source for the most important knowledge, is an undeniable proposition. But so it is, that the mass of men do, to a great extent, graduate their morals by the laws of the land. They stand by these laws, and they change with these laws. The English government was for slavery, and it followed, that the English people were for slavery. The English government abolished slavery, and every Englishman became an abolitionist. The government of our State was in favor of State lotteries, or State gambling. So, too, were her people. But the government laid its suppressing hand upon the vice; and where is there, now, one decent man among us, who would revive it? Is it said, that, in such changes, government does but conform to the demands of the people?—or, in other words, that the people are converted, before government is? I admit, that this is sometimes so; and I admit too, that, sometimes, government is prompted by the few. But, as a general rule, the whole people do not espouse a reform, until government has sanctioned it. The whole people cannot be moved forward, without the help of the example of government.

I proceed to other instances of the power of government to educate the people. The American government is on the side of slavery. It legislates for it; provides securities and facilities for the domestic slave trade; gives up its army and navy, by its whole self, to the slaveholder to enable him to catch his runaway slaves. With its own hand, it opens wide the door for slavery to roam over Kansas and Nebraska with its bowie knives and barbarisms. Now, it is just because the American government is for slavery, that the American people are for slavery. I know it will be denied, that the North is for slavery. Nevertheless it is. I know we shall be cited to the fact, that the people of the North all talk against slavery. But their talking against it, without doing against it—still more, their talking against it, whilst voting, and otherwise doing, for it—proves not their antislavery, but their hypocrisy. I add, that nothing short of their putting away slavery from the whole country should be accepted as proof of their doing against slavery. Is it said, that their hands are tied, and that they cannot deliver their country from this curse and reproach? It is themselves, then, that have tied them. Moreover, they can untie them, whenever they shall please to do so.

I have attributed the proslavery attitude of the American people to the proslavery attitude of the American government. But the people will be quicker to follow government in an antislavery direction, than they have been to follow it in a proslavery direction. Let government, this day, array itself against slavery, and this day, the people will be abolitionists. Let government signify ever so indirectly, or faintly, its willingness to drive slavery out of Kansas—and the people will, at once, call on government, in unmistakable tones, to drive the lawless devil, not out of Kansas only, but out of the whole country also.

War furnishes another instance of the educating influences of government. Every where, government holds, that war is right; and, hence, every where, the people are for war. But let government take the ground, that war is no remedy for wrongs, and that international disagreements should, like individual disagreements, be submitted to peaceful arbitrament—and the eyes of the people will quickly open to the unsurpassed folly, madness and wickedness of war; and they will then learn war no more, and love war no more, and permit war no more.

Again—wherever government undertakes to legalize and shelter the sale of intoxicating drinks, and makes itself, as it generally does, the great patron and nursing mother of that crime and abomination, there the mass of the people habituate themselves to such drinks, and no very small share of them become drunkards. But let government change its policy and stop such sale; and the people will change with it, and rejoice that the sale is stopped; and their practice of drinking intoxicating liquors will cease, and they will, consequently, furnish no more recruits to the army of drunkards.

We are not to wonder, that so many have been found willing to sell intoxicating drinks. The consciousness, that theirs is a lawful business overpowers, if, indeed, it does not absolutely shut out, all sense of its being a wicked business. How can they so much as suspect, that it is wrong, whilst government—nay more, whilst the people—holds it is right? I say the people—for, in a very important sense, and especially in a Republic, government and the people are one. It is hardly too much to say, that the rumseller must feel, that it would be immodest and disrespectful in him to set up, in the face of so high authority, as that of government and people, even one doubt of the character of his business.

Nor are we to wonder, that such vast numbers drink intoxicating liquors, when the government, and the whole people through the government, teach, that it is right to drink them. On such authority to drink them, how can men well forbear to drink them? Nay, I had almost asked, how, on such authority to get drunk, men can well forbear to get drunk. Indeed, it is no very violent supposition, that the rum-drinker may feel, that he would be guilty of disparaging the wisdom of government, and of making an ungrateful and insulting return to the paternal kindness, which appoints persons to sell him the rum, if, after all, he is so obstinate, as to refuse to drink it.

I often think, that our young men and young women know but little, compared with what persons of your and my age know, of the educating power of government, in regard to rum. For, it must be borne in mind, that, in the last twenty years, government has much relaxed its friendship for rum; and that, in the last half dozen years, it has, in many instances, come out its open and effective enemy. I well remember how, in my childhood, I looked upon rum. Its very drops were precious in my sight:—scarcely less precious than drops of melted gold. I did not love the taste of it—for, not being allowed to drink it, I had not yet acquired a taste for it. But I saw how well it tasted to others, and how exceedingly well to a share of them. I said, that I was not yet allowed to drink it. This was not, however, through any fear, that my drinking it would tend to make me a drunkard;—for, at that day, the relation of cause and effect was not recognized, as between rum-drinking and drunkenness. Rum-drinking, being then regarded as necessary, drunkenness could not be numbered among its natural results. No, I was forbidden to drink rum in my childhood for the reason, that it was too good for a child's drink. To gaze upon the precious stuff, and to witness with what eagerness and delight others drank it, was privilege enough for a child. The privilege of drinking it myself was for my after years. That was a joy and an honor in reserve for my manhood.

Such, in my childhood, was my sense of the preciousness and sacredness of rum. Such, too, was their sense of it, who had the shaping of my childhood. And on whom was it, that the responsibility for this delusion rested most heavily? On government. Nothing of all this deep delusion would have existed, had government been doing, at that time, in respect to rum what it has now begun to do. Government is, now, beginning to teach, that the drunkard's drink is fit only to be thrown away—fit only for the thirsty earth to drink (,for, happily, our dear mother earth, can, unlike her children, drink abundantly of rum, and yet not lose her balance and stagger.) In my childhood, however, government made rum its pet interest; protected it with every care; and sanctified the abomination in the public heart. Not strange is it, then, that I grow up, reverencing rum, instead of despising, and loathing, and abhorring it.

I need say no more to illustrate the mighty educating power of government. And I scarcely need add, that if such is this power, the people cannot be too careful to select none but the wise and the good to wield it—none but the wise and the good to be civil rulers. Let me, however, here say, that the ballot-box seems to be the last place, where men can be reformed. There cluster the strongest temptations; and there, owing to our false education, we are weaker, than in any other circumstances, to resist temptations. Good men, when selecting one to fill their pulpit, make judgment and integrity indispensable qualifications. But the same good men, ignorant and infatuated in the sphere of politics, can be incited, by party spirit to vote almost any shallow and corrupt person into the highest place of civil power. And, yet, these good men profess to be guided by the Bible—by that book, which, as abundantly and as emphatically, requires ability, and truth, and righteousness, ay and holiness in the civil ruler, as in the occupant of the pulpit. Oh, when will the professed believers in that precious book be real believers in it? When will they choose for political rulers "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness?" When will they prove by their votes their belief, that: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God?"—nay more, that the ruler "is the minister of God," and that, consequently, he, and he only, is to be selected for the ruler, who is known to act on and act out, the principles of God?

After this long and, perhaps, wearisome introduction, my way is prepared to say, that I greatly value and love our Maine law. One of the Resolutions, which I had the honor to submit to our late State Temperance Meeting, declares: "That nothing can so effectually serve to educate the people into right views of the effects of alcoholic liquors held for sale for a drink, and into right views of the disposition, which is proper to be made of them, as to have government doom such liquors to destruction." It is in the light of the doctrines of this Resolution, as well as for other reasons, that I attribute so much worth to our Maine law. The prompt submission, save in a very few localities, of the whole State to this law is a very impressive lesson of the power of government to educate the people. The people have submitted to the law because it is law; and they believe its restraints to be right because it is law, that tells them so. Over the whole length and breadth of my County no liquor save by one infatuated person is openly sold for a drink:—and thus blest by the law would be every County in the State, not excepting even the County of New York, were it not for the assaults, which eminent jurists have made upon its constitutionality; and were it not for official unfaithfulness to the law; and were it not, also, for the extensive belief, that the law permits the free sale of imported liquors.

The eminent jurists, to whom I have referred, hold, that our Maine law is unconstitutional for the reason, that it does not, in their judgment, provide for such proceedings, as "due process of law" calls for. I admit, that, as I am not a lawyer, it is not for me to say whether our Maine law does provide for such proceedings. I admit too, that, without such proceedings, no inhabitant of our State can be legally deprived of his property. I admit this because our State Constitution declares it. I admit it, too, because the Federal Constitution declares it:—for I hold, that the Federal Constitution declares it as well for the States, as for the other portions of the country. That it does so is manifest both from the letter and history of the clause in question. By the way, I wish those eminent jurists would be impartial enough to apply this clause in the direction of liberty, as well as property; and to admit, that it is a clause as strongly against robbing men of their liberty, or enslaving them, as it is against robbing them of their property. Oh that it were as popular and as profitable to give an Opinion for freedom, as for rum!

I have admitted the claim of these eminent jurists, that certain proceedings are essential, in order to deprive a person constitutionally of his property. But, with all deference to their wisdom and learning, what has this claim to do with the constitutionality of our Maine law? This law dooms to destruction intoxicating liquors, that are put on sale for a drink. But, as I interpret and vindicate it, it asserts no right to deprive persons of property in such liquors. As I interpret and vindicate it, it asserts no right to destroy any property. The right it asserts is to destroy that, which has ceased to be property—that, which, by reason of its mischievous and murderous perversion, has become an outlaw. It asserts not the right to destroy the living and useful horse:—but only the right to bury his putrid and infectious carcass. Nor does it assert the right arbitrarily to outlaw property. All that it claims, at this point, is the duty of government to confirm or repeat the sentence of outlawry, which reason has previously pronounced. I fully agree with that part of Judge Bronson's Opinion against the law, which says, "that the Legislature cannot make a thing a nuisance by merely declaring it to be such. It must be noxious either in its own nature, or from the place or manner of keeping or using it." Had our Maine law doomed wheat or corn, in lieu of rum, to destruction, it would clearly have been in the face of the constitutional clause, of which we have spoken; and the courts would, therefore, have been bound to declare it unconstitutional. I go farther in agreeing with Judge Bronson—so much farther, as perhaps greatly to surprise you. I subscribe to his doctrine, that "whether a thing is a nuisance or not, is a question for the judiciary, and not for the legislature." I mean by this doctrine, that the final decision, whether a given thing is a nuisance, rests with the courts, before whom, and not before the legislature, all the evidence in the case is supposed to be presented; and with whom, and not with the legislature, is supposed to be the superior ability to pass upon both law and evidence.

This doctrine of Judge Bronson does not, however, stand in the way of enacting a Maine law. The Judge will, surely, not deny the right of the Legislature to prescribe penalties for nuisances; and he surely will not deny its right to declare, that certain things are nuisances. He will admit, that the Federal Legislature had the right to declare, that selling liquor to the Indians is a nuisance, and to provide for its abatement. He will admit, that our State legislature had the right to declare, that liquors and gambling apparatus, brought upon certain grounds, are a nuisance, and to provide for its abatement. All that the Judge will claim at this point, and I will unite with him in the claim, is, that if the courts shall find, that what the supposed Maine law declares to be a nuisance is not such, they, the courts, will then be at liberty to override the legislation, and pronounce it unconstitutional and void. The Judge is doubtless content, that, in the case referred to, the Federal courts suffered the Federal law to stand, and that in the case of the liquors and gambling apparatus the State courts suffered the State law to stand; and he will doubtless be content, so far at least as the question of nuisance is concerned, if our State courts shall, because convinced, that intoxicating liquors offered for sale for a drink are a nuisance, and not property, uphold our Maine law. But will these courts be thus convinced? That is the great—and, I also say, that is the only important—question in the case. Once let people, legislature, courts be convinced, that the selling of intoxicating liquors is a nuisance, and that all rights of property therein are forfeited, and such conviction will be a sure basis, on which to build the most stringent and effective Maine law. I add, that no Maine law can be permanently valuable, which does not rest on such a basis.

I repeat my question—or rather what is substantially my question. Should the courts justify the legislature for having declared the forfeiture of all rights of property in intoxicating liquors put on sale for a drink? This question is best answered, in answering the question, whether reason declares such forfeiture:—for if reason declares it, then, manifestly, the legislature is not only at liberty, but is bound, to repeat the declaration. Now, that reason declares it, is obvious from the fact, that, whilst, on the one hand, such liquors do no possible good; on the other, more injury comes from them than from all other material substances put together. As the occasion of crimes, and tears, and death—death this side of the grave, and death beyond it—the selling of intoxicating liquors for a drink stands unrivalled.

I am prepared to say, that our courts will justify our legislature:—for they will not fail to see, that reason justifies it; and they will not fail to see that, in all the States around us, the people and the legislature are coming thus to interpret the conclusions of reason. Moreover, they will recollect, that, when the people of our State elected their legislature for the paramount purpose of getting the Maine law enacted, they virtually declared, that, in their judgment, reason denies all right of property in intoxicating liquors, which are held for sale for a drink. The last thing to be feared is, that the courts will dissent from the legislative declaration, that such liquors are a nuisance. They will have too much respect for reason, and for the legislature, and for the people to be guilty of such dissent—too much respect for the great God, and for poor rum-afflicted humanity.

Is it apprehended, that the drinking of intoxicating liquors by some of the members of our courts will blind such members to the attitude of reason in this case? I am aware, that the tendency of such drinking, especially if it amounts to a habit, is to bring up mists between the eye and the truth. Nevertheless, the truth, that reason pronounces the sale of rum for a drink to be a nuisance, is so glaring, as to be discerned through all such mists; and, I add, that the honesty we may look for in a member of the court is enough to justify our expectation, that such discernment will be confessed. Indeed, it will be no small argument with our courts in favor of pronouncing such sale of rum a nuisance, that every person, whose vision, in this case, is unbeclouded by appetite, or usage, or interest, not only sees the nuisance very plainly, but sees it to be the greatest of all nuisances. For one, I regard it as greater than all other nuisances put together; and I do not hesitate to say, that it were better for the community to have this nuisance abated, and every other allowed, than to have this allowed, and every other abated.

It is not a little remarkable, that nearly all of these distinguished lawyers, who deny the constitutionality of our Maine law, have assumed, that the liquor, which this law pronounces a nuisance and no property, is property. In this assumption they are guilty of begging well nigh the whole question in the case. It is true, that, among these lawyers, there is a Judge in the Eastern part of the State, who does not *assume*, that such liquor is property. He goes into logic *to prove*, that it is. But alas for his logic! He argues, that such liquor is property, because what it was made of was property. What "the infernal machine" and the murderer's torpedo-box were made of was property. Will this learned Judge, therefore, contend, that the sacred rights of property attach to these devilish destroyers? To be consistent he must. Hence, as his logic proves too much, it proves nothing. It is due to this Judge, that I admit, that, as I have seen but an extract from his Opinion, I may not have represented him justly.

The Opinion of Mr. Daniel Lord against the constitutionality of our Maine law is much relied on by the enemies of the law. But if one, who knows so little of law, may be allowed to speak freely of a legal paper drawn up by one, who knows so much of law, then I do not hesitate to say, that this Opinion of Mr. Lord is, because of the gross errors in it, utterly worthless.

Mr. Lord regards the legislature, as having, in the present instance, presumed "to make" and "to create" a nuisance, whereas it has, as in innumerable former instances, but *declared* a nuisance. Moreover, its declaration of a nuisance in this case is just as open, as are its declarations of a nuisance in all former and in all other cases, to the revision of the courts. If, in the present instance, the legislature has declared that to be a nuisance, which shall turn out before the courts, not to be a nuisance, it is no more to be charged with usurpation, than when the mill-dam, which it has declared to be a nuisance, turns out before the courts not to be a nuisance. In the one case, as much as in the other, it has but fallen into an honest mistake, which, in the one case, as much as in the other, the courts are at full liberty to correct. Mr. Lord should not have contributed to the prejudice against our Maine law by setting up this unfounded distinction against it.

Again, if I understand Mr. Lord, he would deny to the legislature the right to declare that to be a nuisance, which was not a nuisance by the common law, at the date of the Constitution—that is, as I suppose, which had not, as yet, been convicted, at the common law, of being a nuisance;—for a thing may prove to be a nuisance, at the common law, which has not yet been convicted of being such. The principles of the common law expand in their applications with the progress of knowledge. If over the presence of potatoes, or rum, shall prove to be the cause of fevers or cholera and small-pox, then will such presence be confessedly a nuisance, at the common law.

I take it for granted, that Mr. Lord would subject the courts to the same restriction, which he has here imposed upon the legislature. Hence if the cholera, in its most malignant and wasting form, should now break out in the city of New York; and observation and science should reduce it to a perfect certainty, that some great accumulation of hops or tobacco in the city was the sole cause and support of the disease—both the legislature and the courts would, according to Mr. Lord, be impotent to abate the nuisance. I suppose Mr. Lord would admit, that the Constitution might be so amended, as to shut out hops and tobacco from the limits of lawful trade:—but ere that could be accomplished, all New York might be dead. I need say no more to illustrate the unsoundness of this doctrine of Mr. Lord. Were it adopted, it might be found to stand sadly in the way of human progress, human happiness, and human life. I add, that this doctrine finds no countenance in the Constitution of our State. That paper imposes no such restriction on either the courts or the legislature: and happily it is of higher authority than the vagaries of Mr. Lord.

What I have said on that point is sufficient to show, that the selling of intoxicating liquors for a drink is a nuisance. I add, that, as this is the most wide-spread and pernicious of all nuisances, so the legislative, or, in other words, the most authoritative and impressive, declaration, that it is a nuisance, is especially called for. There are, necessarily, ten thousand cases, in which the legislature must leave it to the individual to treat as a nuisance, subject to his responsibility for so treating it, what he may conceive to be a nuisance. But, in the present instance, and for the reason I have just given, the legislature is emphatically bound to declare the nuisance, and to provide for its abatement. Again, if the destruction of the liquor is left to the option and responsibility of the individual, he may, under the promptings of ignorance or malice, destroy that, which is not put on sale for a drink, and which is, therefore, still property. Moreover, having done the wrong, he may be both unable and unwilling to repair it. I spoke of the liberty of the individual to attribute to a thing the character of a nuisance. Judge Bronson very properly says: "A public nuisance may be abated by any one; but he will act at the peril of being able to prove, that the thing was in fact a nuisance". I add, that if such is the right of the individual, it surely must be the right of the Legislature to enact, that a thing is a nuisance, which, in its honest judgment, is such;—the enactment being always liable to be overthrown by the courts.

Only a few years more, and every State in the Union will be blest with a Maine law. It requires no great, no not the least, progress in virtue to realize this prediction. They can, who believe, that this temperance cause will but keep pace with the general morality. Natural vices will be overcome, and cast aside, only as virtue and moral truth shall advance. Not so, however, in regard to an unnatural vice like rum-drinking. I call it unnatural, for the reason that there is a natural repugnance to be conquered, ere the habit of rum-drinking can be formed. Gluttony and sensuality may be called natural vices, inasmuch as the appetites, which they indulge or abuse, are natural. But the habitual rum-drinker has had to create a new and unnatural appetite. Now, wherever a people has come to see as extensively as the people of the United States has come to see it, that it was a great mistake to attempt to increase the sum of human happiness by drinking intoxicating liquors, they will not fail to correct the mistake!—and they will correct it easily—for, instead of having to encounter their natural appetites, as they have to do, when endeavoring to overcome their natural vices, they will have the help of these appetites to correct the mistake. No—all that is necessary to induce the people to set up the Maine law in all our States is to get their eyes open only a little further to the evils of intemperance—to the folly, of which the sober are guilty in supporting an immense army of drunkards, and in allowing, on the average, to every hundred families some two or three dram-shops, or manufactories of paupers and madmen. No—all, that they need to this end is to get their selfishness a little wider awake—and then, whether they have one particle of christian morality or not, they will come down upon the selling of alcoholic drinks, with a vengeance, that shall not leave one undestroyed shred of the detested abomination.

But my purpose in referring to the fact, that the Maine law will soon become the law of the whole nation, was not to explain why it is, that this fact will come to pass. Nor was it my purpose to improve the opportunity of telling the opponents of the law, that to beat it back for a few months, or even for a few years, will pay them but poorly for their pains, and for the utter blasting in the end—the speedy end—of all their hopes. No—I referred to this fact, for no other purpose than to say, that, in almost every part of the nation, the public sentiment is preparing so rapidly, and calling so loudly, for the enactment of the Maine law, that to delay the enactment is to expose the people to the temptation of taking the law into their own hands. Repeatedly within the last few years has the case occurred, in which women, impelled by the sight of drunken husbands and drunken sons, have collected, and marched to the dram-shop, and vented their indignation in destroying its contents. Who could blame them? No one would blame them, had their work been killing dangerous dogs. Is it said, that the dogs bite? So does rum—and with a bite as much more to be dreaded than that of dogs, as the soul is of more value than the body. Is it said, that the rum can be shunned, but that the dogs cannot be; and that, therefore, the rum may be left, whilst the dogs must be killed? I answer, that the rum cannot be shunned:—that there are millions of our poor brothers, whose self-control is so weakened—so prostrate—that, if rum come within their reach, they will drink it!—ay, even though it be to take their pauper families afresh on the public charity, and to renew their demoniac zeal to burn, and shoot, and stab.

For one, I could not blame, but my whole heart would honor, the group of persons, who, in any State, where the legislature refuses to enact a prohibitory or Maine law, should destroy the intoxicating liquor, which is put on sale for a drink. They would obey the law of self-defence—a law, which is paramount to all statutes and constitutions. I add, that statutes and constitutions are entitled to retain their authority, and can retain their authority, over the public conscience, only so far as they keep pace with the true and everlasting law of self-defence.

I am often asked, whether I believe, that our courts will pronounce our Maine law unconstitutional. What I have said shows, that I do not believe they will pronounce it unconstitutional on the ground, that it denies rights of property in intoxicating liquors, which are put on sale for a drink. Whether it will do so on any other ground I feel myself incompetent to judge. Let it be declared unconstitutional, if for any reason it is essentially so. We do not need an unconstitutional Maine law. If the present is not a constitutional law, we can, and will, have one, that is.

I am often asked, too, what, in my opinion, is the relation of the law to imported liquors. But that relation, whatever it is, does not affect (though many suppose it does,) the question of the constitutionality of the law. I am free to admit, that the phraseology in the first section of the law respecting imported liquors is, to say the least, unfortunate. Certain it is, that, looking at this phraseology only, such liquors are no part of the subject matter of the law. If any thing in other parts of the law can be justly held to bring such liquors within its scope and prohibitory operation, I shall be glad. I add, that so great is my fear, that our courts will except such liquors from such scope and operation, that I should be glad to see an extra session of the legislature called forthwith for the purpose of having the law so amended, that its meaning, at this point, shall be certainly and unmistakably—beyond all doubt and cavil—in behalf of reason and justice and humanity. Tens of thousands of hearts bleeding at every pore under the blows of intemperance great, day and night, for the promised and expected operation of the law. But the law is paralyzed to a great extent by the influential Opinions, that it tolerates the free sale of imported liquors. I add, that, at such a session, the law might, perhaps, be improved in other respects also;—for it would not be strange, if the criticisms upon the law, and the operation of the law, have suggested the improvement of it in other respects also. Is it said, that the calling of the legislature together for the sake of amending a single law is too great a cost? I answer, that not only are there precedents for it, but that it is hardly too much to say, that this law is of more importance to the people of our State, at the present time, than are all other laws put together.

But the great and frequent question, which runs through the ranks of the friends of temperance, is what they shall do at the ballot-box. To my mind nothing is more certain than what is the appropriate answer to this question. Let them resolve unalterably to vote for no candidate for legislator, or judge, or for any office, which can, by any possibility, be connected with the execution of the Maine law, unless such candidate honestly and boldly denies every right of property in intoxicating liquors, that are offered for sale for a drink. Let them do this, and then all will be safe. So far as the temperance question is concerned, they need require no other qualification in their candidate. To require less than this would be to make themselves guilty of treason to the cause of temperance, and of contemptible folly.

With great regard, your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

PETERBORO, *May* 18, 1857.

EDWARD C. DELAVAN,

MY DEAR SIR,

I have your letter urging me to attend the approaching meeting of the New York State Temperance Society. This pleasure is denied me, since I must be in Wisconsin at the time of the meeting.

You are deeply desirous that the Society shall take a right position in regard to the new liquor statute. So am I. I hope it will judge wisely of the merits of that statute, and candidly and kindly of the votes, that were given for it. Not a few of these votes came from men, who love the cause of temperance. Ay, not a few of them from men, who would rejoice as much as you and I in a "prohibitory law." They did what they thought to be the best thing they were capable, in existing circumstances, of doing for temperance.

There are parts of this liquor statute, which I hope the Society will not fail to commend. No friend of temperance should refuse to help enforce its prohibition to sell intoxicating drinks on certain days. Nor should any friend of temperance refuse to stand by its provision for punishing the drunkard.

But, in my judgment, no friend of temperence can consistently give any countenance to that part of this statute, which provides for licensing persons here and there to sell intoxicating drinks. I might add that no intelligent person whatever can consistently give it any countenance.

Intoxicating liquors put on sale for a drink are either property, or not property. They are either property, or, as our "Maine Law" called them, a nuisance. If they are property, then, beyond all controversy, all persons have the right, and an equal right, to sell them. If, on the other hand, they are a nuisance, then in whosoever's hands they may be, nothing remains but to abate the nuisance. That courts do not act upon these principles is only because courts are more addicted to follow precedent than common sense. Why should they not boldly protect every man in selling intoxicating drinks? It is a shame that they should skulk behind a statute. They know that the right to sell is one of the incidents of property; and that, wherever the right of property is unconditional and perfect, this incident is inseparable from it. Hence they know, that the legislation, which denies this incident, is void—as utterly void as would be the legislation, which denies property. Every person, who believes that the rights of property attach to intoxicating liquors in all circumstances must, to be consistent, be opposed to this new statute. Of course, I can consistently approve it, so far as it denies the right to sell such liquors for a beverage—because I hold that all rights of property in them cease as soon as they are offered for sale for a beverage. That moment they become a nuisance. Before this perversion, they were as sacred as any other kind of property. Valuable uses might they have been put to. But now not one good, however small, is to come from them. Nothing now but woes innumerable, deep, matchless. The pistol, whilst in my pocket, is property. But the moment I take it in my hand, and give it a murderous aim, all property in it is lost: and you or any other bystander can wrest it from me, and destroy it with impunity. The day will come, when the public sentiment will accord as full liberty to destroy the intoxicating liquors, which are transformed into the deadliest of nuisances. I add here, that the day is just at hand, when the courts will feel compelled to say, that intoxicating liquors, when offered for sale for a drink, are still property, and may therefore be sold by all; or are not property, but a nuisance, and may therefore be sold by none. There can be no permanent middle ground. The sale of intoxicating drinks must be free either in all hands or none. Both rich and poor must be forbidden to sell them; or both must be allowed to sell them. What a shameful violation of equal justice to deny the right to a poor man, and accord it to his neighbor because he has money to pay for it!

Oh that the friends of temperance were faithful to their cause! How soon then it would be crowned with triumph! But, alas, it is well nigh vain to try to serve this dear cause, so long as its friends continue to betray it at the polls! If they would only resolve, and abide by their resolution, to give their votes to no men, who recognize the rights of property in intoxicating liquors put on sale for a drink, then would a few years witness the extensive redemption of our land from the curse of drunkenness. But so long as they shall continue to know as law, sacred obligatory law, the infernal statutes, or the infernal parts of statutes, which authorize the heart-breaking and murderous uses of intoxicating liquors, so long will they continue to dignify the dramshop, make the frequenting of it respectable, and drunkenness excusable. If your Meeting shall take the right ground at this point, it will bless the State, the nation, and the world. But if it shall fail to take it, then infinitely better that it had never been held.

The ignoring of the claims of temperance at the last Fall's Election was a crime, which many tears of penitence cannot wash out. And how poor was the excuse, that in order to help freedom, temperance must be neglected! I too have some love of freedom. But I will let her perish, ere I will serve her at the expense of temperence. It is not true however, that we harm one good cause by helping another. On the contrary, if we would do most effectually for one good cause, we must be faithful to every other. Reformers must not be one-idea men. Their hearts must offer a home, and their hands must offer help, to every great truth. Their lives must be devoted to the whole circle of human interests.

The friends of temperance—I mean of prohibition—cannot be at too great pains to disabuse the public mind of the impression, that they are in favor of sumptuary laws. I would that they all confined the province of government to the sole duty of protecting persons and property—for then would they all be able to argue the rightfulness of prohibition. How clear is it that the government, which licenses or tolerates the dramshop, grossly and wickedly fails of protecting the persons and property of its subjects! The dramshop—call it a hotel, or by any other name—is a manufactory of paupers and madmen. A heavy burden for the sober to bear are these paupers. And what vessel, or car, or stage-coach, or building, or precious life is safe from the destructions, which rum-made madmen are dealing so constantly and thickly all around them? It is not alone when they have drank enough to stagger, that men are dangerous. The preternatural excitement, which the captain, engineer, or driver derives from but a single glass, may be sufficient to peril all the lives entrusted to his care.

Now, to say nothing of the duty of government to shield the industry of the sober from this burden of pauperism—how manifest its duty to suppress this manufacture of maniacs! Were shops to be opened for making madmen with exhilarating gasses, or by means of some other temptations, government would promptly shut them up. Why then does it not shut up the dramshops? Because it is accustomed to protect them; and the people are accustomed to the protection. Nothing so much as custom has the power to sanction and to blind.

Is it said that the drunkard ought not to be punished until he has actually committed crime?—and that therefore the drunkard-maker should not be punished? I reply that drunkenness is itself a crime—and a crime of which government should be especially cognizant. For it is when men are drunk, that they are wont to commit the most frightful crimes against person and property—against what government is charged to protect. Why then should not government punish, both in the drunkard and drunkard-maker, this parent crime? All other crimes put together do not, so much as this one, hinder the functions of government. The story goes, that a man was doomed to make himself guilty of one of three crimes. He chose drunkenness, as the least of them; and whilst drunk committed the other two, one of which was murder. In making himself crazy, one is rendered morally guilty of all crimes—for in so doing, he throws off all restraints, and leaves himself free to commit all crimes. Hence the employment of the dramseller is rightly called murderous, not only with reference to his murdering the body and soul of the dramdrinker, but also with reference to the possibility, not to say probability, that the dramdrinker will, whilst in his dramshop frenzy, murder others.

I would return for a moment to the misapprehension of the object of temperance legislation. The chief reason why our most intelligent emigrants from Germany are so much prejudiced against laws to restrain the sale of intoxicating drinks is because they confound them with sumptuary laws. Now, I would have them persuaded that all, which we prohibitionists ask of Government, we ask for the sole purpose of protecting persons and property—a protection, which the Germans need in com-

mon with all other people; and which we are equally as desirous to have them as any other people enjoy. The New York State Temperance Society should be at especial pains to have its positions and objects clearly understood by the Germans. To my eye they are the most hopeful element in our whole American population. They will prove themselves to be the most radical, and trustworthy, and efficient friends of liberty. They will heartily embrace the cause of temperance, as soon as they are relieved of their prejudices against it. What is more, their independent thinking, and their subjection of the whole realm of religion to the tests of reason will, in the end, make them our best christians. For, after all, the christian, who thinks and decides for himself, and is unswayed by human authority—the rational christian, who builds up his faith at every point on simple reason—it is he, and he only, who is fit to be called a christian. Bigotry, superstition, mental slavery characterize all other christians.

By the way, I hear Germans complain of the classing of their light beers with intoxicating drinks. They ought not to be so classed, if people do not get drunk upon them. They ought not to be proscribed by law, if people do not become insane and dangerous upon them. In saying this however, let me not be understood to commend any beers. I, who have not so much as tasted even tea or coffee for a quarter of a century, have no praises to bestow on any other beverage than simple water.

Your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

COMPENSATED EMANCIPATION.

A SPEECH BY GERRIT SMITH,

in the National Compensation Convention, held in Cleveland, Ohio, August 25, 26 and 27, 1857.

Mr. President!

Many are urging me to reply to the speeches made this afternoon by my friends Watkins and Pryne. Not all who make up the very large assembly this evening were present to hear those able and eloquent speeches, which, I confess, brought me to a solemn revision of my position. Sure am I that none who did hear them, envy me the task of replying to them. Why am I selected for this difficult service? Perhaps it is because they and I having worked together thus far, there is curiosity to see how we will behave toward each other, now that we have arrived at a point of divergence from each other. There is one consolation in my circumstances—the strength of the opposition has been brought out, and if I can cope with what is before me, I shall have no reason to quail before the apprehension of what is to follow.

We are met, Sir, to initiate—I might perhaps rather say to inaugurate—a great movement, one that is full of promise to the slave and the slaveholder, and our whole country. It is not so much to awaken interest in their behalf that we have come together, as it is to give expression to such interest—a practical and effective expression.

We are here for the purpose of making a public and formal, and, as we hope, an impressive confession, that the North ought to share with the South in the temporary losses that will result from the abolition of Slavery. Indeed, such are our relations to the South in the matter of Slavery, that, on the score of simple honesty, we are bound to share in these losses.

Whether, in the eye of the Constitution, Slavery is national or sectional, or whether there is, as I hold there is, no authority for either, so it is that our Slavery is actually national. The whole nation has contributed to nationalize it—the whole nation has made itself responsible for it. The sin of extending the area of Slavery, and of encouraging the slaveholders to multiply their investments in human flesh, lies at the door of the North as well as at the door of the South. Northern commerce has connived at and openly upheld, Slavery. So have Northern politics. And we have seen Churches, religious associations, institutions of learning, at the North as well as at the South, apologizing for Slavery, and bowing quite down to the ground in presence of the demon and in deference to his claims. Texas could not have been annexed, nor the Missouri Compromise repealed—no, nor established—without the help of the North. Without the help of her schools and churches there never could have been a Pro-Slavery public sentiment at the North. Nor could such a sentiment, nor could Slavery itself, have continued to exist at the South, without such help. It is not too much to say that, at the North, as truly as at the South, ecclesiastical as well as commercial and political gains have been sought for, by sparing and flattering Slavery.

Now, all this being true, it is very plain that the North as well as the South is bound to contribute to relieve the slaveholders in the straits to which they would be reduced by the abolition of Slavery.

But, Mr. Pryne says the North should pay nothing, for the reason that, in proportion to her connection with and responsibility for Slavery, she has lost as much by Slavery as the South has. What if she has? Nevertheless, the fact remains that the North is rich, and the South comparatively poor. Now, the reason why we call on the North to help in this case is not alone because of her complicity, but also because she is able to help.

Mr. Watkins says that the slave, and not the slaveholder, is entitled to compensation, and he adds, "I put my feet on Mr. Smith's proposition." My proposition was that the nation shall pay to the emancipated slave $25 and to his master $150, and that the emancipating State shall, by assessments on the lands within its limits (the value of such lands being greatly increased by the abolition of Slavery), add $75 to the $150. I need not say that I have no sympathy with the plan of appropriating the public lands to this object. I am a land-reformer, and I hold that to the landless belongs the vacant land. Slavery is a great evil; but land monopoly, because it has manifold more victims, is a far greater evil. Moreover, there could have been no Slavery but for land monopoly; and to abolish the latter is the only sure way to abolish and prevent the return of the former. I can, therefore, favor no plan which countenances land-monopoly, and recognizes Congress as a great landholder. But to return to Mr. Watkins. Is it nothing that, in addition to the $25, I propose to give to the slave the slave's own self? Moreover, does not he see that to propose to give most of the money to the slave, instead of the slaveholder, would be to defeat all hope of getting him free? Very gladly would I have all the money given to the poor plundered slave, if the slaveholder would still be willing to give him his liberty.

But it is said that we ought not to offer in advance to the slaveholder any measure of indemnity, because doing so is bribing him to do right. Now I readily admit that I would prefer to have the slaveholder prompted to do right only by the purest and highest motives. I would have him emancipate his slaves immediately and unconditionally because it is the slaves' right to be thus emancipated, and because the slaveholder sins fearfully in resisting this right. Nevertheless, so guilty and horrible is the relation of slaveholder and slave, and so full of misery to both—aye, and so full of damage and peril to the whole nation—that I would be willing to make the most direct appeals to the selfishness of the slaveholder in aid of hurrying him to dissolve this relation. Besides, I am not willing to admit that his moral sense would be weakened and his repentance rendered less probable by such appeals.

My neighbor is a drunkard, and therefore the torment of himself, his family, and his friends. I invoke his reformation in the name of all the tenderest, and highest and holiest motives. If, then, I add to these motives such as are inferior, do I necessarily sin? Oh, no! I do not sin in telling him that, in the event of his forsaking the intoxicating cup, I will bless him

and his hungry family with the gift of a cow. My offer of the cow is useful in many respects. It serves to commend to him the sincerity which prompted me to array before him the better and nobler motives, and in doing this, I would, as a simple and short argument would suffice to show, commend the motives themselves. For to believe our teacher sincere is a wide step toward believing that he reasons correctly. The connection between sincere purposes and sound arguments is altogether natural. Again, my offer of the cow serves to persuade him of my deep sense of his sin, and thus to suggest that he, too, should cherish a deep sense of it. In a word, the offer is far more like to do him good than harm. So, too, the slaveholder is far more like to be benefitted than injured, if, when I have set before him the high and commanding reasons why he should let the oppressed go free, now and unconditionally, I prove my sincerity and my sense of the wickedness of his relation, by telling him that I will act a brother's part, and share with him in the loss of his terminating that guilty relation.

Connected with this objection that we are bribing the slaveholder, is the objection that our offer of money to him will be construed into our recognition of his rights of property in man. For one I deny all rights of property in intoxicating liquors, when they are offered for sale as a beverage. (Here let me say that my zeal for temperance carries me as far as my zeal for Freedom; and let me add, that I believe the cause of temperance will continue to drag until its friends take the ground of *no property in alcoholic liquors when they are put to the Satanic work of making paupers and madmen.*) I was saying that I denied all rights of property in such case. But surely I do not involve myself in inconsistency, if I tell the rumseller that provided he will throw away his rum, I will help support his family. Surely, in telling him so, I do not stamp upon his rum-filled casks the sacredness of property. No more do I make Slavery rightful, when I tell the slaveholder that if he will throw it away, I will help him get an honest living. But, however this offer of money to the slaveholder may be in appearance, or effect, certain it is that we do not intend to recognize therein the rightfulness of slaveholding. We make the offer because we believe fraternity and honesty require us to make it—fraternity and honesty both to slaveholder and slave. We deny all right of property in man. We believe that the image of God, no more than God Himself, is to be counted merchandize. We believe that immortality is never to be confounded with a commodity.

Whence comes it that we are charged with admitting property in man? It comes from a confusion of ideas in those who charge it. Our acknowledgment that the slaveholder would, in liberating his slaves, be entitled to our money, is reckoned by them to be all one with our acknowledgment of his right to hold his slaves. I admit his right to our money—yes, his *moral right.* For if, in the circumstances of the case, we are under moral obligation to give the money (and it is indispensable to the success of our undertaking to feel that we are), then does it follow that he has *a moral right* to it, notwithstanding the opposition which my use of these words yesterday encountered. But, in admitting the emancipating, and because emancipating, impoverished slaveholder's right to our help, we no more sanction slaveholding than we sanction drunkenness by helping him who had been a drunkard, or sanction rumselling by helping him who had been a rumseller. We would help these, and why not him? Let us hasten to cast away the foolish and wicked prejudice which stands in the way of our helping the slaveholder also.

Both Mr. Pryne and Mr. Watkins say, "If the slaveholder has the right to sell, he has the right to buy." That is a true proposition. But we do not acknowledge his right to sell. We do not mean to buy from him. Even, however, if we did buy from him, we should not therein acknowledge his right to sell. If I buy my friend out from under the uplifted dagger of the murderer, I do not therein acknowledge the murderer's right to strike the blow. I said that we do not mean to buy the slaves. All that we mean (at least so far as I am concerned) is, that when they shall have been emancipated, we will share in the loss of the emancipators, and help them in their reduced circumstances. Did we mean to buy the slaves and sanction the selling of them, we should propose that the slaveholders receive the whole, instead of one-half of their market value. Liberally as we are willing to share in the loss of the slaveholder, we nevertheless mean that the greater part of it shall fall upon himself. This is but right. As he will be, in a moral point of view, the principal gainer from emancipation, so he can well afford to be the principal pecuniary loser from it. Let me here say that I am not one of those who would, by an extravagant offer of money, tempt the slaveholder to emancipate. Our offer must be reasonable—such an offer as wise and practical men would make—such as the North would approve and sustain. We must not, in our eagerness to commend our plan to the South, forget that there is a North, and that the plan will come to nothing, unless its chief features are such as shall gain the cordial assent of the North.

Another objection to our movement is that the slaveholders will be richer after than they were before emancipation. The emancipating States I admit will be. But the slaveholders, in their new and strange circumstances will, at least for a season, be comparatively helpless, unless they are aided by the State or nation, or both.

It is also objected that such a sum as the slaveholders would accept would be much larger than the North would consent to share in paying. But the North could well afford to pay a very large sum for the sake of delivering the slave from the most miserable and the slaveholder from the most guilty of all relations—especially since it is for the life of the nation that Slavery be ended speedily and peacefully.

On the other hand is the objection that any sum the North might offer would be so small in the esteem of the South as to call out her indignant rejection, and breed a still worse tempec than now exists between them. But her actual rejection of it, however indignant, would not prove it to be too small; and as our anticipated rejection of it could not cancel our obligation to make the offer, so it should not be allowed to deter us from making it.

It is said, too, that the South will regard as meddlesome and offensive any action we may take on this subject, and even our entertainment of the subject. A part of the South, doubtless will. But even if the whole South should, that will not prove us to be wrong. At any rate, we must respect and respond to the claims of honesty and fraternity in our own consciences, however false the judgment that may therefore be put upon us. We must be faithful to our national relations, and show ourselves ready to assist our countrymen, however in turn we may be misunderstood or maligned. I do not deny my fears that the South will repel us, and reject every scheme and every idea of emancipation. Mighty are the habits of self-indulgence and despotism engendered by Slavery. When has it been found possible to break those habits? When have any people been known to surrender them? Few are less hopeful than myself of the peaceful abolition of American Slavery.

Another objection to our movement is that it will tend to supersede the means which are now employed to accomplish the overthrow of Slavery—prayer, preaching, lecturing, voting, &c. Oh no! it will not have this tendency. On the contrary, it will concur with these means, and, as we hope, give effect to them. None the less will these means be wielded, after we shall have added to them this new one. On the contrary, they will then be wielded all the more earnestly and perseveringly, because all the more hopefully."

Mr. Watkins referred to my own labors in the cause of Freedom, and in terms quite too complimentary for me to repeat. He predicts that they will be counteracted by this new movement. But happy, heaven-blessed and greatly successful will I regard these poor labors, if they shall be found to be at all instrumental in preparing the public mind for this movement, and in reconciling the people of the North to the idea of sharing with their Southern brethren in the temporary losses incident to the abolition of Slavery. Mr. Pryne, too, believes that this new measure will stand in the way of the other measures for overthrowing Slavery.

Mr. Watkins thinks that the undertaking will minister to the self-complacency and triumphant air of the slaveholders, and that they will say to us, "Gentlemen, you have given up your principles, for you now wish to buy our slaves." But what they would call buying, and which is not buying, would be, not the abandonment, but the natural progress and legitimate effect of our principles. When the Anti-Slavery man has traveled quite across the low grounds of profession, and has ascended to that higher plain where not only words are spoken but deeds are done, and heavy and self denying pecuniary sacrifices in the cause of the slave are welcomed, then has he proved, not his denial of his principles, but his attachment to them—not their worthlessness and impotence, but their great preciousness and their power to carry him forward in the work of humanity and Heaven.

Mr. Pryne holds that our scheme violates the Constitution. I readily admit that it does violence to his and my views of both the Constitution and Civil Government—though it does none to the popular views of either. Oftentimes, and with the

consent of the nation, has our Government used its means in a way that justifies, so far at least as the question of constitutionality is concerned, the present proposed use of them. I confess that it was not intended to provide in the Constitution for the raising of moneys to effect the abolition of Slavery—for on all hands was it understood that Slavery would come to its natural death in a few years. When Mr. Pryne said that I had been his political Gamaliel, and that at my feet he had learned to restrict the whole province of Government to the protection of persons and property, he both honored me and did justice to my creed. I do not deny that Government, in the use we are now proposing to put it to, would be found quite outside of the range of its legitimate functions. I take pleasure in admitting that Mr. Pryne did skillfully, and as fairly as skillfully, argue my inconsistency. He made my own political creed, with which he is so entirely familiar, his principal and most effective means in proving that I am now plunging into error. Nevertheless, I justify myself in sanctioning the contemplated agency of Government. I justify myself, however, only on the ground of the necessity of the case. Our nation is brought to the brink of ruin; and if it can be saved in no way authorized by the Constitution and by the nature and office of civil government, yet would I have it saved.

John Quincy Adams held that, to save the nation, Congress might abolish Slavery.

Thomas Jefferson, and many of the statesmen of his day, denied that there was constitutional authority for extending the limits of the nation. Nevertheless, so necessary did they deem the annexation of Louisiana that they acquiesced in it. It is largely owing to this annexation that American Slavery has attained its gigantic growth. Indeed, the evil could hardly have lived to the present day, had it been confined within its ancient boundaries. Now, if an unconstitutional measure, fraught, as was the annexation of Louisiana, with so much misery and ruin, can be justified on the ground of national necessity, then surely on that ground can a measure, even if it is unconstitutional, be justified which will dry up that flood of misery and save the nation.

There is another thing to be mentioned here. If our present movement does look to Government for unconstitutional action—and for the sake of the argument we admit that it does—still, since such action will not take place until the people North and South, East and West, shall call for it, its unconstitutionality will be comparatively unobjectionable. When all the people agree to make Government their common agent in a work of salvation, the inquiry whether the work is constitutional has lost most of its importance.

Before leaving this topic of constitutionality, let me express the hope that nothing I have said will be construed into my admission of the lack of constitutional power to abolish Slavery. That is not civil Government—but, on the contrary, a detestable counterfeit—which has not the power, and the will also, to save its subjects from being chattels.

Mr. Pryne likened the slaveholders to counterfeiters and thieves. He asked whether we ought to help a gang of counterfeiters, who had become poor by being compelled to give up their counterfeiting? I answer that we ought most emphatically, if we are their fellow counterfeiters, and have encouraged them in the iniquity, and are able to help them. He asked whether we should share in the losses of a company of detected horse-thieves? Most certainly, if we are their fellow-thieves, and have it in our power to relieve their poverty. "Honor among thieves" is a motto that the people of the North should feel the fair application and full force of, when called on to help their fellows of the South.

There is still another objection that I must notice. It is, that if compensation shall ever be in order, it will not be until the slaveholders shall have truly repented. "When the sky falls we shall catch larks." But will it ever be so condescending? Will the slaveholders ever take it upon themselves to repent? It is hardly probable that the mass of them will.

According to this objection, if I see a fiend preparing to murder a whole family for the sake of money, and I know I can buy him off, I must not do so. The most I shall be allowed to do is to give him money when he shall have shown himself to be the subject of Christian repentance. But ere that time has come, he will have murdered the whole family. So, too, if we wait for the slaveholders to repent, many more generations of our ill-starred brethren may have to pass through the torments of Slavery.

I confess that the objector in this case is intent on the deliverance of the slave, but he would have it accomplished only through the salvation of the soul of the slaveholder. Of every other way he is exceedingly jealous. Now, I do not deny that I am so unorthodox as to make more account of the freedom of the slave than of the salvation of the slaveholder. If the slave is emancipated, my great desire will be realized, and that, too, whether, in the process of his emancipation, the slaveholders have or have not become penitents.

But I must close. Long have I looked forward to this day. Many, many years have I longed for the inauguration of this movement. Although nearly alone among my Abolition brethren in believing that the North ought to share with the South in the losses resulting from the abolition of Slavery, still I never could refrain from believing it. They are just men. Honestly do they differ from me, and hence I have no reproach for them. May they in turn be as patient with me as they can be. Especially should they be thus patient, seeing that it would be impossible for me to be consistent and honest, and not take the ground I have taken. For I would have my friend—for I would have myself—bought out from under the yoke of slavery—and it therefore follows that I should be inconsistent and dishonest, were I not willing to have all other slaves bought out from under it. The abolitionists are consistent and honest in opposing us:—for they would not compromise their principles by allowing a price to be paid for the ransom of their friends, or even of themselves. They would rather live and die in the chains of slavery than have them broken by the power of money. That they would do so I am of course compelled to assume. For if they would not, then, in the name of all consistency and honesty, what right have they to be denouncing and vilifying us for our willingness to use money in delivering the millions of slaves? Yes, I am compelled to assume that the abolitionists have attained to such a sublime disinterestedness in carrying out their principles, as to prefer remaining in slavery forever to having a penny paid for their deliverance. For if I do not assume this, I cannot vindicate their sincerity.

The work on which we are now entering will be mighty and effectual if we shall make it a work of love. Love is the remedy for human wrongs—as well the wrongs which lie within as those which lie without the province of statesmanship. The grand reason why statesmanship is and always has been a failure, is just because love is not and never has been allowed to be its constant prompter and ever-burning soul. Unhappily, it is thought that having a heart disqualifies a man for being a statesman. But he, and he only, can be a true statesman whose understanding is controlled by a loving and Christian heart. Love is looked upon as a weakness and as incompatible with wisdom. But love alone is strong, and where there is no love there is no wisdom.

Political men who take up the subject of Slavery—this Convention which is taking it up politically—must take it up in love, or more harm than good to the cause of Freedom will come of it. The Abolitionists, too, must infuse more love into their efforts. Vigorous and clear as are their apprehensions of Slavery—just and impressive as are their descriptions of it—that is not enough. They must have more heart; and they must have it not for the slave only, but for the slaveholder also. The chief reason why the Southern conscience yields so slowly under the labor of the Abolitionists, is that it does not feel it to be a labor of love. I would that all the Abolitionists lay hold of this measure, which we are now laying hold of. I do not say that they would in this wise give all needed proof; but I do say they would give one strong proof that the truth, which they speak to slaveholders, is spoken in love.

The Republican party is hated by the South, because it is regarded there as selfish and sordid. Let it, however, identify itself with the great measure of this Convention, and it would give therein such an evidence of its benevolent and fraternal interest in the South as it has not hitherto given. Cordially do we invite its co-operation. Cordially, too, do we invite the co-operation of the Democratic and Native American parties, and of the churches, and of the Anti-Slavery Societies. In a word, we call upon the whole country to come forward under the promptings of love—of love to the slaveholder and the slave, to the Slave States and the Free, to earth and to heaven, and to put away Slavery entirely and forever. That is a work worthy of the help of all. Who is there that can refuse to bear a part in it?

Dec. 21, 1857

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FROM THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE.

MR. GERRIT SMITH ON THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

THE CURRENCY AND THE HARD TIMES.

To the Editor of the N. Y. Tribune.

SIR: On reading the President's Message I felt, as I but too often have had occasion to feel, that certain views of civil government, which a few minds have so long regarded as vital to the welfare of the human family, will not soon prevail. Only in a distant future will their truth and value be realized. The President is but like nearly all other statesmen in his adherence to the old theories of government. I refer especially to those which accord so wide a province to Government, and leave so narrow a one to the people. The people should own their Government. But, under the influence and operation of those theories, Government has everywhere become the owner of the people.

The Message says:

"It is one of the highest and most responsible duties of Government to insure the people a sound circulating medium," &c.

And again:

"In the mean time it is the duty of the Government, by all proper means within its power, to aid in alleviating the sufferings of the people occasioned by the suspension of the banks, and to provide against a recurrence of the same calamity."

But in the day when juster views of its functions shall obtain, it will be admitted that civil government is under no such obligation. Neither our Federal nor State Governments owe any such duty.

Government is but to protect the rights of person and property. In going further it becomes a usurpation. One of these rights is the personal liberty of every innocent person. Hence, Government should forbid Slavery. It is also bound to protect its subjects from maniacs; for maniacs put in the greatest peril both person and property. Hence, it is bound to suppress the dram-shop—that being the chief manufacturer of maniacs as well as of paupers.

Far better—far more in the line of his official duty—would it have been for the President to call on Congress to forbid the sale of intoxicating drinks in the City of Washington, than to call on it to attend to the currency. Congress might listen to such a call from such a source; though, I well remember, it would not condescend to listen to my speech in behalf of this same object. Hitherto, a Temperance speech on the floor of Congress, save a brief one from the same lips, had not been known. Would that it might henceforth become a common thing!

By the way, the nation would not have been deprived of the services of Charles Sumner, had Congress, before Brooks fell upon him, been willing to be moved by a Temperance speech or by any other cause to put a stop to the sale of intoxicating drinks in the City of Washington. Poor Brooks! I became acquainted with him in Congress, and found him to be a frank, pleasant man. He allowed me to speak freely to him of his habit of drinking liquor. He promptly confessed his sorrow for it; and added that he would be glad to subscribe a Congressional Temperance pledge. But for liquor he would never have committed his enormous crime. But for liquor, how small would be the proportion of the great crimes in our land!

Since the much-mooted subject of the currency has come up in my quotations from the Message, I will make that the chief subject of my letter. I will but glance at my views of it, as these are the first lines I have written for the press since a very severe illness, from which I have not yet entirely recovered.

Let me say, in the outset, that notwithstanding my political theories are all very democratic, I am nevertheless not among the advocates of an exclusive metallic currency. Paper money cannot circulate among a barbarous people, for such a people lack confidence. But a civilized people have confidence, and such a people—most emphatically if highly commercial, and withal so young as but to have begun the development of their resources—will not consent to dispense with the immense convenience and advantage of paper money. A civilized people can afford to repose confidence, for such a people have intelligence to guide the exercise of their confidence.

There is nothing in the nature of civil government, and there is nothing in the Constitution, to justify the Federal Government in banking, or in undertaking to authorize it in others. Moreover, all its Constitutional power in the matter of the currency is simply to coin your bullion or mine, or any other man's. Nor has a State Government anything to do with banking; and it has nothing whatever to do with the currency. This does not, however, result from any prohibition in the Constitution. The Constitution but forbids the coining of money by a State. Perfect uniformity in coinage was held to be indispensable. Hence this service could not be intrusted to a multiplicity of agents. But to say, as the prominent statesmen of the country are saying, that the Constitution forbids a State to engage in banking, has no justification whatever. That it may not engage in banking, nor assume the right of authorizing persons to do so, results solely from the natural limitations of the powers of civil government.

What, however, if the Constitution did, and even in express terms, too, forbid a State to engage in banking? That would not make it forbid the people of the State from engaging in it. It does not follow that the people of a State are to be barred from manufacturing because the State itself is.

I add, that not only are the people of the State not forbidden, under any just theory of government, to be bankers, but that for the State to forbid them is a violation of rights so gross as to justify revolution. Every man has the right to become a banker; and any number of men have the right to associate themselves for banking.

But it will be urged that if all men are left free to turn bankers, the public will be visited with frequent and great losses. If, however, this should certainly prove to be so, nevertheless Government is not to violate the rights of the people—no, not even to save the people from frequent and great losses. But would there be such losses?

Abolish the present system of banking; leave any person or association of persons entirely free to issue as many notes for circulation as they please. This is their natural and perfect right; and I apprehend that its exercise would but rarely be attended with loss to the public, if so be that adequate penalties for the abuse of the right were provided and enforced. What would be adequate penalties? The State Prison for a couple of years in case of failure to redeem, at all times, notes of a less denomination than twenty dollars. In case of failure to redeem other notes, or to pay deposits, let the penalty be the obligation to pay threefold the legal rate of interest from the time of refusing payment until the time of actual payment; and the further penalty of being disabled, after one year's delinquency, from ever again issuing notes for circulation, or keeping an office of deposit.

But why have the penalty in the former case so much severer than in the latter? Because failure in the former would generally be so much more disastrous, and occasion so much more suffering than in the latter. It is small bank-notes that are in the hands of the poor. It is the failure to redeem such that sends distress among the poor. A loss of five dollars with them might be more in its effects than the loss of five thousand falling elsewhere. It might be the all of some poor man, while the loser of the large sum might still be left in the midst of his comforts and abundance.

It will be said that no person would risk the State Prison penalty, and hence that no notes of a less denomination than $20 would be put in circulation. Happy, thrice happy, if there would not. For then the losses from unredeemed notes would be comparatively rare. The poor would have their little store in specie; and as to those who receive notes of $20 and upward, they would see to it more carefully than now what they receive, since the habit of taking small notes without proper caution induces the habit of taking *all* notes without proper caution.

Notes of less than $20 should be neither received nor disbursed by the State nor corporations. The corporations would have no ground for complaining of this disability. It would be a part of their bargain with the State—a bargain in which they get privileges from the State. Are they deprived of a natural right? They surrender it in exchange for legislative grants and advantages.

Again, any person or association that issues notes for circulation should be required to state at the close of each year the maximum amount of their circulation in each month of the year. Let the average of these maximums be the sum to be assessed with taxes. Further, let the statement (and it should be a full one, and made under oath, to be punished very severely if found to be false) be published for the information, in many respects, of the whole people.

I referred to the losses of the public in case all men were allowed to turn bankers. But would they all turn bankers in the face of the hindrances which I have proposed, and even issue small notes? Very rare indeed, and very well known, must be the integrity and responsibility of those who, notwithstanding the State Prison penalty, could succeed in putting small notes into circulation. Moreover, such persons would not be so defiant of the public sentiment, nor so careless of the possible infliction of the penalty even in their own case, as to attempt to put them in circulation.

And would all turn bankers in case no notes of a less denomination than twenty dollars could gain circulation? I well remember that upward of forty years ago, the country was for a time flooded with notes. The irresponsible and obscure contributed to this flood by issuing their notes for a dollar, and for smaller sums, even down to one cent. They could not have got their ten or even five dollar notes into circulation. But how well known for honesty and for great and sure wealth must they be, who could succeed in swelling the currency of the country with their twenty and fifty dollar notes!

No; if the circulating paper shall consist of notes no lower than twenty dollars, then men of well ascertained and entirely undoubted responsibility will, in the end, alone supply it. In that state of things, the losses of even noteholders would be fewer and lighter than under the extolled banking system of our State. But how immeasurably better off would depositors be in that state of things than under this system? Under this the private property of the banker is liable to only a very limited extent. But under that which I am commending, the whole indebtedness would be the only limit of the responsibility. Under the present system, too, no disgraceful disability, and, indeed, no punishment whatever awaits delinquency. But under that which I would have take its place, not only is the failure to redeem small notes made felony, but the failure to redeem large ones and pay deposits is made good cause for an ignominious disability.

The security of the creditors of our banks is greatly overrated, and the delusion at this point needs to be dispelled. A certificate of deposit signed by W. B. Astor would, in point of fact, be surer than if, in his stead, half the banks in New-York were jointly pledged to pay it. So, too, the obligation of Erastus Corning to pay would be backed by a greater amount of money to pay than if possessed by half the banks in Albany put together. From the nature of his property, the obligation of James S. Wadsworth would perhaps be still surer than that of Mr. Corning. What a sound and welcome share of the currency of this State it would be in the power of each of those gentlemen to furnish! And if all their names were to each note, might I not add that the currency they would furnish would be honored in every part of the nation? What I have said of those gentlemen I might, to every needed extent of the occasion, have said of not a few others. Sufficient to say that among them all there would be enough to step forth and supply the public with a safe currency, were once the present unnatural and absurd system displaced by one that is natural and reasonable.

What makes the "hard times?" There is no need of this incessant question. A people so morally insane as to number Slavery among their "institutions"—so infatuated and wicked as to confound the pre-eminent piracy of the whole world with real and sacred and obligatory law, and so ignorant of political economy, and so lacking in common sense, as to count up in human bodies one or two thousand millions of their wealth, and to make that vast sum, which is but a sheer fiction and a ridiculous fancy, an essential part of the basis of public and national credit—have surely no need to wonder at the frequent recurrence of "hard times." By the way, why do our economists, in counting bodies as a part of our national wealth, count slaves only? Men are means of acquiring property. If for that reason they may be counted at the South as property itself, why not at the North also? But that, as it would show the comparative poverty of the South, would not suit the policy of the day.

The abolition of Slavery would contribute to prevent the frequent and distressful derangement in the commerce of the country. Still more would the abolition of land monopoly. Indeed, to allow every man his natural right of access to the soil would be to remedy no small share of the greatest ills which the world suffers. Abolish land monopoly, and the great mass of poverty would speedily disappear.

What makes the "hard times?" Extravagant living is, doubtless, among the most efficient causes. In this folly the masses of the American surpass the masses of every other people. Just here let me say that the frightful waste of property, strength, health, life, morals, in the use of tobacco and intoxicating liquors is an immense drawback on the prosperity of our country. How lamentable that even the warmest friends of temperance—the most earnest advocates of total abstinence—should shrink from taking the ground that such liquors, when offered for sale for a drink, are not invested with the sacred rights of property, but are to be known and treated simply as a nuisance!

Our enormous imports go far to account for our "hard times." The tariff men are right in saying that no country can be prospering greatly which imports much more than it exports. I cannot, however, fall in with their plan for reducing the excessive imports. Better to let the evil continue than to invade the natural right of men to buy and sell freely where they please. If we allow our regards for all portions of the human family to be impartial, we shall see no more fitness in restricting the commerce between nations than between counties and townships.

The wasteful expenditures of the national Government help largely to account for the "hard times." These expenditures are several fold as great as they should be: and I add that they are several fold as great as they would be, were the cost of administering it defrayed by direct taxation. Never shall we have an honest, economical, and cheap Government, until the people bring themselves to consent to pay the expense of it in direct taxes. For Government well knows that it will never be held to a strict account by the people, and never be faithfully and effectually watched by the people, so long as its extravagance, be it ever so great and ruinous, is paid for only indirectly. When its expense shall come to be a conscious, because a direct burden on the people, that expense will no longer be sixty or seventy millions a year, nor a quarter as much. A very small navy will then suffice; and a comparatively unexpensive armed police will then take the place of armies.

Again, for so young a people, we have multiplied railroads too rapidly, and invested far too much capital in that direction. Moreover, the moneys to build them have, in very many instances, been obtained at excessive and even ruinous rates of interest. The facts that most of the roads have been built in too great a hurry to be well built, and that most of them have been mismanaged, are further explanations of the waste of capital.

I will add still another to my enumeration of the causes of "hard times," "pressures for money," and kindred evils. This is, the usury laws. These laws are among the superstitions that still linger in the political and economical world—for there are superstitions there as well as in the religious world. Let every man who has money to lend, be left entirely free to bring it to the common market, and to receive for the use of it whatever may be the ruling price.

But, after giving due weight to all other causes of our commercial revulsions and "hard times," it must be admitted that we shall never be exempt from these evils so long as our system of corporate banks continues. They, more than any other one cause, contribute to those frequent universal expansions and contractions of credit that are fraught with such wide-spread distress and ruin.

I made the supposition that Mr. Astor, Mr. Corning, and Mr. Wadsworth might become bankers in the event of the sweeping aside of the present artificial banking arrangements, and of the adoption in their stead of arrangements in harmony with natural rights and with common sense. Steady would be their issues—for on the one hand their great wealth would save the necessity of hastily and irregularly contracting them, while on the other their great caution, growing out of their unlimited liability for the redemption of their issues, would prevent the undue expansion of those issues.

I close my letter with saying that no evil is to be apprehended from leaving the people to the free exercise of their natural rights, provided only that Government will wield, faithfully and unsparingly, its ample penalties for the abuse of those rights.

GERRIT SMITH.

PETERBORO, *Dec.* 21, 1857.

To the men who put me in nomination!

Now that the Election is past and my labors connected with it are ended, I owe a few words to those who did me the honor to name me for the office of Governor.

As soon as I accepted the nomination I entered upon the work of holding Meetings in all parts of the State. They numbered fifty three, and consumed an average time of about two and a half hours. They were generally large, and frequently there was not room for the crowd. To attend them has cost me some four thousand miles of travel and two and a half months' time.

The novel character of the Meetings was enough to make them interesting. They were filled up with questions and answers and occasional discussions between my questioners and myself. They were emphatically a school for acquiring knowledge of the province and duties of civil government—a school in which we were all pupils, and in which we were all at liberty to be teachers. Should such a school be opened by all the candidates for high executive office and legislative office, the masses could not fail to grow rapidly in political wisdom.

I hope that the good accomplished by these Meetings will not be estimated by the smallness of my vote. They have perhaps had the effect to reduce rather than increase it. Very unpopular answers were drawn from me by those who questioned me in regard to the Common School, the Poor House, the Rights of Woman, the Legalization of a Sabbath, Tariffs, &c. &c. Manifestly the people are not yet prepared to receive the thoroughly democratic theories, which I have spent so much of many years in inculcating. Manifestly I must live and die an unpopular politician. Still I may not have lived in vain; and the words, which I have spoken and written, may not all die with me.

I cannot doubt that my Meetings have exerted considerable influence against the Caucus System—that bad System which has robbed the people of the right of suffrage, and left it to handfuls of demagogues to dictate the choice of rulers. That the voters are degraded to the one work of registering the decrees of the Caucus need but be said to be believed. Happily, the practice of interrogating the candidate in the presence of the popular assembly cannot obtain without subverting the Caucus System. Is there any thing else that can subvert it?

You, who put me in nomination, are abolitionists and prohibitionists. Indeed, it was to promote the shutting up of the dramshops in our State and the shutting out of the kidnappers from it, that you desired my election. I trust that my Meetings have done something toward reviving Temperance and Freedom. I found them well nigh dead wherever I went: and, I confess, that they still show but few and faint signs of life. What folly to connect such great sacred causes with a vulgar political party! What folly for reformers to go into such a party! How many of the sadly *partyized* old friends of Freedom and Temperance have within the last three months told me that I was ruining the Republican Party! So stone-blind were they to the obvious fact that the Republican Party was ruining them!

That there are but few abolitionists and prohibitionists in this State is evident from my small vote:—few, I mean, who are earnest enough to place their abolition and prohibition above the claims of party. There are, it is true, many who prate against slavery. Surely it can be no more than prating, so long as they vote for candidates who admit slavery to be law, and candidates who are willing that our State should suffer the kidnapper to prowl through it in quest of his prey. There are many too who prate for prohibition. But that this also is mere prating is manifest from the fact that only a very small proportion of the professed prohibitionists were willing to break out from their parties in the recent Election, and vote for the only prohibition candidate for Governor. I know it will be said that many real prohibitionists voted for Mr. Morgan because they were duped into the belief that he is a prohibitionist. Alas, they were willing to be duped! So transparent a falsehood could carry away none but such as were willing to be carried away by it. Let what will be said to the contrary, they, who have now voted with the Republican and Democratic and American Parties, have voted in effect that the dramshop shall continue its horrid work of multiplying drunkards and pests and blasphemers and murderers. If any of them were cheated by misrepresentations, they were for the most part those, whose political relations and state of mind were such, as made them glad to be cheated.

I have referred to the smallness of my vote. I confess that it is far below my expectation. Early in the last month I believed it would go as high as fifty thousand. More than this, it seemed at one time as if the Republican Party was getting discouraged, and that I might therefore possibly get a still larger vote than I had counted on. But by the middle of the month I found that the results of the Elections in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana had inspired Republicans with confidence and Democrats with fears. The inclination of Republicans to come to me was now arrested: and Democrats had become more accessible. In this altered state of things I saw the necessity of reducing the estimate of my vote—for I could not expect to get more than one Democrat toward making up my loss of three or four Republicans. Nevertheless even down to the day of the Election I felt sure that my vote would go as high as thirty thousand; and I told many and wrote many that I hoped it would reach forty. My opinions of the result of a political canvass will not henceforth be valued very highly.

I am not sure but Governor Seward's Rochester Speech did more than all things else to damage my prospects. It passed for an Abolition Speech: especially because it espoused our old Abolition doctrine that in the end the States must all be blessed with Freedom, or all given up to the curse of Slavery.

I hope that the friends of Temperance will not be discouraged by this Election from further political action. Such action must be continued, or Temperance will continue to decline. The dramshop must be shut up, or the desolating tide of drunkenness will keep rising. Hence he must not be regarded as an earnest Temperance man, who votes for anti-prohibitionists. Never did I feel more need of the shutting up of the dramshop than in my recent tours through the State. Almost every where I met evidences of the greatly increased use of strong drink and tobacco. As a general proposition they go together. The relinquishment of the one will be the relinquishment of the other. What a curse are they to this generation! And a greater curse will they probably prove to the generation that shall inherit our ram and tobacco-defiled, debased, dwarfed nature. I am aware that such matters are held to lie without the province of statesmanship. But to my mind no statesman should be ignorant of them, or unmoved by them.

I hope too that the radical friends of Freedom will not be discouraged by their fewness in this Election. Never was there more need of their perseverance—for never were her prospects darker. How very rapid her decline since the public mind was drawn away from the abolition to the non-extension of slavery! By the year 1846 the Liberty Party, which was ever intent on abolishing slavery, had swelled its numbers to sixty or seventy thousand. The strong antislavery sentiment of that year was responded to by the House of Representatives in a vote of 115 to 106 for shutting out slavery from all the territory we had wrested from Mexico. But by the next Session the majority was the other way. In 1847 the Liberty Party was swallowed up in a virtually new Party, whose candidate had never been known as an abolitionist. The next year this new Party gave place to another, which placed at its head that preeminent opponent of the abolitionists, Martin Van Buren. Nevertheless this Party of 1848 was compelled by the popular sense to be somewhat of an Abolition Party. It promised (and with Mr. Van Buren's express consent) to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. So also in the next formed Antislavery Party—that of 1852—there was a measure of Abolition. But utterly impotent for good did these Parties prove; and so will every other, that does not go for the abolition of all slavery, and that does not, instead of conceding legal protection to any part of it, hold every part of it to be a piracy and an outlaw.

In his Inaugural Address (in 1853) President Pierce was emboldened by the growing proslavery public sentiment to say that slavery "is recognized by the Constitution and stands like any other admitted right, and that the States where it exists are entitled to efficient remedies to enforce the Constitutional provisions."

In 1854 the Missouri Compromise was repealed, and the absurd doctrine of "Squatter Sovereignty" installed in its place. Absurd indeed—for since the American people own the Territories they cannot escape from the obligation to govern them. They can abdicate only when they cease to own them: and that cannot be until they become States.

In 1856 the Republicans built their platform and put in it not one Abolition plank. Even as late as 1851 an attempt was made by the Antislavery Party in Congress to repeal the Fugitive Slave Act. But by the year 1856 sham Antislavery Parties had so far done their bad work upon the public mind, that there was no longer a call for such repeal.

Under the demoralizing processes of these sham Antislavery as well as Proslavery Parties the country was now prepared for that culmination of wickedness, the Dred Scott Decision. Next came the vote in Congress by which the Republican Party conceded to a Territory the right to come into the Union with or without slavery:—that sad vote, which cast this Party down into one indiscriminate heap with the other Parties upon the low ground of "Squatter Sovereignty."

Nothing now remains for the Republican Party, or for its speedy and more nationalized successor, but to fall in with the virtual doctrine of the Dred Scott Decision and of Mr. Buchanan's positions, that slavery exists, or may exist, in all the States by force of the Federal Constitution.

After all was I not wrong in attributing so dark a prospect to Freedom? This antislavery quackery is necessarily near its end. The nonsensical movements against slavery will soon be all over. We shall soon touch bottom. Then for an upward movement. Then for an earnest and rapidly growing Abolition Party:—a Party, that will not meet slavery with mere negations and the whining, cowardly deprecation of its extension: but that will boldly array against that mighty positive power another and a mightier positive power—Liberty against Slavery. It is only in the grapple of these two powers with each other that Slavery can be conquered.

I referred to the Dred Scott Decision and Mr. Buchanan's positions. Abhorrent as they are to every right-minded man, nevertheless why should they be complained of by Republicans or by any other men, who admit the legality of slavery? Mr. Buchanan was entirely right in saying that slavery was as Constitutionally in Kansas as in Georgia or South Carolina. Nay, if man can be property, then can slavery, which is simply the reduction of man to property, exist any where, let statutes or even Constitutions say what they will to the contrary. The abominable Lecompton Constitution did not err in saying: "The right of property is before and higher than any Constitutional sanction". For property is not, as it is often called, the creature of law. Law can protect, but not create, it. Property, being such in the nature of things, is necessarily property everywhere. Barley and butter, being recognized as property in this State, who would not suffer Virginia to deny the rights of property in the barley and butter, which New Yorkers had carried to the Richmond market. If then New York allows that men can be property in Virginia, why should Virginia be expected to tolerate the denial of the rights of property in men who dwell in, or who are carried to, New York? Whoever admits that A B can lawfully hold slaves in Virginia is estopped by this admission from denying the right of A B to bring them to New York and continue to hold them in slavery, or in other words as property.

I do not forget that the safety of Kansas from slavery will be cited to show that I am wrong in what I have said of the worthlessness of the Non-extension-of-slavery Parties. It is true that Kansas is safe from slavery. So she has been for years. This however is not the work of Parties. It is work that has been done outside of Parties. Kansas owes her safety under God to her own brave spirits and strong arms. It is true that she could not have had them all but for help from abroad—but for the wisdom and benevolence of those lovers of Liberty who embarked and persevered in the work of sending her men and munitions and money. No man out of Kansas has done so much as Eli Thayer to save her: and no man in Kansas so much as John Brown—Old John Brown the fighter.

Oh no! Kansas owes her salvation to no Party—to no Speeches and no Votes either in Congress or elsewhere. She owes it to her ample preparations to repel by physical force the aggressions of slavery. She believed slavery to be a pirate—the superlative pirate: and she prepared herself to deal with it in just that common sense way that every persistent pirate is to be dealt with.

Kansas would have been just as safe from slavery as she is now, even had the attempt been made by the President and all Congress to force the Lecompton Constitution upon her. Just as safe as she now is would she have been, had the Federal Government declared war upon her.

GERRIT SMITH.

PETERBORO, *November* 5, 1858.

PERSONAL LIBERTY BILL.

MARCH 1859.

Among the many important duties of the New York Legislature there are three which are incomparably more important than all the others.

1st. To shut up the dramshops, and thus restore tens of thousands of people to sanity.

2d. To do what it can toward relieving the State Constitution of the deep disgrace of making a white skin one of the conditions of suffrage.

3d. To protect all innocent persons within the limits of the State—especially the weary and heart-broken fugitive slaves.

Unspeakably gratifying is the prospect that the last mentioned duty will be performed. If it shall not be, it will be owing solely to the delusion that the Federal Constitution is proslavery. Not only however is it antislavery, but full of power to abolish every part of American slavery. Conclusive arguments to this end have often been made by WILLIAM GOODELL, LYSANDER SPOONER, GERRIT SMITH and others. The following extracts from Mr. SMITH's Speech in Milwaukee June 17 1857 will be read at this time with fresh interest.

Having now said for what I did not, I will proceed to say for what I did, come here. It was for only one thing; and that is, *to beseech you to know no law for Slavery, and to trample under foot whatever claims to be a law for Slavery.* Possibly, however, there are persons in this assembly who would stop me on the very threshold of my argument by telling me that the Constitution is for Slavery. But what if it is? What if, from beginning to end, it is all for Slavery? That does not make Slavery a law. That does not make the Constitution a law for Slavery. That but proves that the Constitution itself is no law. The first thing in regard to any statute, constitution or decree, is not to determine by means of it what other things are or are not law, but whether itself is or is not law. Preliminary to applying the yard-stick to the measurement of the cloth is the inquiry whether it is a yard-stick—whether it is a true measure.

The Constitution cannot be a law for Slavery. It cannot be, if for no other reason than that so far as it may be for Slavery, it is void. Just so far it is void for absurdity. Not less, but infinitely more, absurd would the Constitution be in declaring man a chattel than in declaring wood stone or stone wood. But surely you would not regard as law the declaration that wood is stone or stone wood. How much less then should you suffer the declaration that man is a chattel to command your respect and obedience! We are surprised and amused by the historical fact that a Roman challenged for his favorite horse the honors due only to a man. But wherein is it more absurd to count a horse for a man as did the Roman, than to count a man for a horse, as does the slaveholder?

Again, so far as the Constitution might be for Slavery, it would be void for blasphemy. For if classing with brutes and sinking into chattelhood and putting on the auction-block beings made in God's own image is not blasphemy, what then can be? For if to make Him vile by making them vile is not to insult Him, how then can He be insulted?

Is it claimed that the Constitution is a law for Slavery on the ground that it is a bargain between the whites and blacks for making one the slaves of the other? But such a bargain would be void for lack of mutuality and consideration. It is not credible that the blacks came into it; and if they did, it is not possible that they received an equivalent, or, indeed, any return whatever for consenting to be reduced to Slavery. Such a reduction does of itself incapacitate for receiving any, even the least measure of compensation. In the very selling of his manhood the seller puts it out of his power to receive the purchase money. He cannot be paid for making himself a chattel. Every attempted bargain for unmanning himself is necessarily void. Perhaps it will be said that the bargain in question was not between the whites and blacks, but between the whites and the whites—the whites of the North and the whites of the South. But quite as emphatically in such case as in the other would the bargain lack validity. For certainly it is not competent for two parties to annul the rights of a third. They may enter into a compact to confirm but not to destroy his rights. To say that the Constitution is a bargain between two descriptions of persons to take away all the rights, ay, even all the manhood of a third, is to say that the Constitution is the guiltiest and foulest of all conspiracies, and at the very furthest remove from all possibility of being law.

My next reason for insisting that the Constitution cannot be a law for Slavery—that, indeed, no paper can be—and that, in short, a law for Slavery is impossible, is, that no person can administer or recognize Slavery as law without being dishonest—without doing unto others as he would not have others do unto him. What man is there in my hearing who, were he to fall under the yoke of Slavery, would not rejoice to have both court and people scant the idea of law for Slavery, and illhereto him, at whatever expense to the claims and honor of human enactments? There is not one; and hence, if there is one who knows Slavery as law, he is dishonest. I say not that he is conscious of his dishonesty, and is therefore among the worst of men. I but say that he is guilty of it.

I will detain you with but one other reason against interpreting the Federal Constitution to be a law for Slavery. So to interpret it is to leave ourselves without a Federal Government. That is not government which does not promise protection in return for allegiance. That is not government, but a naked despotism, which, instead of protecting its subjects, strips them of every right, even the right to themselves; and by its outrages upon them, cancels all its claims upon them. Away, then, with those interpretations of the Constitution which go to release four millions of our countrymen from all allegiance to the Federal Government, and to prove it has not the character, and is unworthy of the name, of government! Away with those interpretations which authorize, which necessitate, these four millions to be rebels and enemies in our bosom! To the tyranny which holds him in slavery no man owes aught but to hate it, and overturn it if he can. The lawful enemy of his country is every slave.

There is another point of view in which we could not be certain of a Federal Government, had the Constitution authorized or permitted Slavery. In each State a handful might have succeeded in reducing the masses to Slavery, and thus have left the Federal Government without citizens or subjects.

But to return to my declaration, that, even if the Constitution were from beginning to end in favor of Slavery, it nevertheless could not be a law for Slavery. Do not understand me to admit that it is in favor of it. Most emphatically do I deny that it is. Such denial is due to truth and to the memory of the men who adopted the Constitution.

The Constitution is not for Slavery unless they who adopted it meant it to be for Slavery. But there can be no evidence that they so meant, unless there is evidence that they saw Slavery in the Constitution. When the masses vote for a paper, it is never to be alleged that they vote for crime in it, unless the crime is on the face of it, and they are thereby certainly apprised of what they are doing. Hence we do our ancestors great and cruel wrong when we charge them with having established the superlative injustice of Slavery in a paper, which, at the most, but covertly alludes to it. If Slavery is openly there, then blame them; but not if it only lurks there. It is worthy of mention that the Courts concur with common sense in holding that no law is to be interpreted in behalf of palpable injustice, unless such injustice is expressed in irresistibly clear terms. Says the Supreme Court of the United States: "Where rights are infringed, where fundamental principles are overthrown, where the "general system of the laws is departed from, the legislative intention must be expressed with irresistible clearness to induce a "Court of Justice to suppose a design to effect such objects;" 2 Cranch 390. Surely he must be quite ignorant of the spirit

which prevailed among the American masters at the close of the Revolutionary war, who believes that a Constitution expressly and clearly for Slavery would have been adopted by them.

But it is said that they who framed the Constitution intended it to be for Slavery. What if they did? The Constitution is not what the handful who framed it, but what the many who adopted it, intended it to be. A deed of land is not what the scrivener, but what the grantor and grantee meant to have it.

I am not willing, however, that the framers of the Constitution should be misrepresented or dishonored. I see not one particle of evidence that they meant to establish Slavery, or even to spare it for another generation. They put into the Constitution many powers, any one of which is capable of being wielded for the immediate and entire overthrow of the whole system of American Slavery. Did they qualify them so as to exempt Slavery from their operation? This they certainly would have done had they been intent to establish Slavery, or even to prolong its life beyond a few years. But they did it not. They did not say, "No person except a slave," but "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law." They did not say, "The right of the people except slaves," but "The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." It is superfluous to remark that the masters will throw down their whips whenever Government shall obey the Constitution and protect the slaves in taking up their muskets. The framers of the Constitution did not say, "The right of the people except the slaves," but "The right of the people to be secure in their persons," &c., "shall not be violated." Nor did they confine Congress to color or condition in obtaining recruits for the army and navy. I need not say that Slavery would come to a speedy end were Congress to go among the blacks as freely as among the whites to supply the army and navy with officers and privates. It is only by observing in every direction the policy of proscribing, degrading and outraging the black man, that Slavery can be maintained. Again, in forbidding attainder, the framers of the Constitution did not except Slavery, which is the worst possible form of attainder. Nor did they provide for the defeating of the writ of habeas corpus by allowing the plea—the entirely effectual plea—of property in man. They provided for the suspension of the writ in certain specified cases; but Slavery is not one of those cases. Well did Professor Christian say, "It is this writ which makes Slavery impossible in England."

When I said that the framers of the Constitution put many powers into it that could be used effectually for the destruction of Slavery, I hope you did not understand me to claim that such use of them was their purpose. All I claim at this point is, that, inasmuch as it was understood on all hands that Slavery was to cease in a few years, no care was taken and no disposition was felt, to protect it from being swept away by the principles and provisions of the Constitution.

Am I asked why the framers of the Constitution did not in terms provide for the abolition of Slavery. I answer that in the first place, inasmuch as Slavery was dying and doomed, this was not thought to be necessary; and that in the second place, they were not willing to let posterity learn from the pages of the Constitution that their country had ever been disgraced with Slavery. The silence of the Constitution respecting Slavery shows far more loathing and shame of it than could any express condemnation of it, however emphatic.

But it is said that there is history to prove that the framers of the Constitution were willing to let Slavery continue. I admit it. What is more, I admit that there are clauses in the Constitution which contribute proof of the truth of this history. Nevertheless, to go into history for the sake of interpreting these clauses in behalf of crime is, as we have already seen, wholly unwarranted by the rules of interpretation. It is its letter, and not its history, that is the Constitution. For the sake of the argument, however, I will admit that these clauses refer to Slavery.

But for how long was Slavery to continue? Only for some twenty years were they willing to let it continue. And what is more, the mass of it was reasonably expected to be of the comparatively mild type of house and farm Slavery, and not of the severe type of plantation Slavery. The difference between the two is sufficiently marked by the fact that the price of a slave then was but one-fourth to one-sixth what it is now. His low price at that time indicates how comparatively light was his labor—how comparatively easy was his lot.

I said that the framers of the Constitution expected Slavery to continue for only some twenty years. The historical truth that, in this country as well as England, the cessation of the African slave-trade was looked to as the cessation of Slavery itself, is undisputed. Now, history is confirmed at this point by the migration and importation clause of the Constitution: that clause protecting the trade for only twenty years. But that Slavery itself was expected to continue only so long is manifest from the fact that this protection, brief as it was, was to be enjoyed only by the then existing States. But if the new States (and remember that the Constitution expressly provides for their admission) were not to be allowed to participate in the African slave-trade, it was because they were not to be allowed to have Slavery. Having Slavery without recruiting it from Africa was a thing not then thought of. If, however, the new States were denied the right to have Slavery, it follows that the old States were not to be allowed to establish it—since that would be to allow an inequality of rights between the new and the old States. No one claims that such inequality exists in the contemplation of the Constitution. The Hon. S. A. Douglas, in his Report on Kansas to the Senate, March 12, 1856, affirms in sound logic and emphatic language the constitutional equality of the States. "The limitations," says he, "which that instrument (the Constitution) has imposed, are few, specific and uniform—applicable "alike to all the States, old and new. There is no authority for putting a restriction upon the sovereignty of a new State, which "the Constitution has not placed on the original States. Indeed, if such a restriction could be imposed on any State, it would "instantly cease to be a *State* within the meaning of the Federal Constitution, and in consequence of the inequality would as-"similate to the condition of a province or dependency. Hence, equality among all the States of the Union is a fundamental "principle in our federative system—a principle embodied in the Constitution, as the basis upon which the American Union rests." These just views of this intellectual and distinguished Senator were doubtless held by the framers of the Constitution. And how, therefore, was it possible for them to justify this restriction upon the new States, and this virtual exclusion of Slavery from them, on any other principle than that Slavery was to be terminated, and not established, in the old States? The clear-headed Senator can himself come to no other conclusion. He cannot fail to see that on any other supposition than that Slavery was to cease in a few years in all the States, the framers of the Constitution intended that it should ordain inequality of rights between the States.

Just here I would say that this migration and importation clause was insisted on by the representatives of two States only. They pleaded for the continuance of the African slave-trade on the ground that South Carolina and Georgia were not so well supplied with servants as the other States; and that it was therefore due to equity and to the equality of the States to allow them to get further supplies for a few years from the Coast of Africa. Indeed, but for its unwillingness to distinguish these States invidiously and to mortify their pride, the Convention would have expressly confined the trade to Georgia and South Carolina.

Another proof that Slavery was allowed only a brief duration is to be found in the Ordinance for the North-West Territory. That and the Constitution were framed at nearly the same time, and to some extent by the same men. The Ordinance provides for the recapture of fugitive servants; and, inasmuch as it speaks expressly of Slavery, we will assume that fugitive slaves are included. But the Ordinance, like the migration and importation clause in the Constitution, confines its benefits at this point (if benefits they may be called) to the old States. It was only those who had escaped from "any one of the original States" that might be recaptured. Hence, like that clause, the Ordinance also shows that the new States were not to have Slavery at all, and that the old States were not to have it after the few years allowed them in which to bring it to a peaceful and gradual close.

But I may be asked why, since the Ordinance and the migration and importation clause both prove so clearly the policy and purpose of abolishing Slavery, there is nothing in the fugitive servant clause of the Constitution to prove the like policy and purpose. Why does not this clause, like that in the Ordinance, limit the right of recapture to "the original States?" *The simple and sole explanation is that this clause in the Constitution does not refer to slaves.* Is it strange that it does not? No. It is not at all strange that they, who might consent to have the common territory of the nation made a slave hunting ground for the few years of its territorial existence, should refuse to offend the dignity and insult the self-respect of a State by making it one also.

The fact that this clause does not limit its use to the old States, utterly forbids the putting of a Proslavery interpretation upon it. If the Convention intended to have it apply to slaves, why did they not qualify it so as to make it correspond with the Ordinance and the migration and importation clause?

Again, the language of the fugitive servant clause in the Constitution makes it wholly inapplicable to slaves. The persons referred to in this clause are debtors. Service is *due* from them. But the slave being a mere chattel, and, therefore, incapable

of making a contract, can owe nothing. Says Justice East: "A slave is incapable of contract." The slave code all declare that he can own nothing. But manifestly, he who can own nothing can owe nothing.

Then the history as well as the letter of this clause proves that it has no reference to slaves. The pretence that it is a Proslavery compromise of the Constitution is preposterous. In none of all the numerous plans of a Constitution before the Convention, were fugitive servants of any kind referred to. Not only was there but little running away of slaves at that time, but, of course, very little account was made of their running away when their price ranged from only $100 to $200, and when it was universally understood that all American Slavery was to cease in some twenty years. It would have so ceased but for the calamitous invention of the cotton gin.

It was only twenty days before the Convention closed its labors that the subject of fugitive slaves was mentioned. A motion was then made to provide in the Constitution for their recapture—a motion in terms for the recapture of fugitive *slaves*. It was immediately and indignantly scouted out of the Convention. The motion of the next day, which spoke not of slaves, but of persons who owe service, was instantly adopted. There was not one word of discussion, and not one dissenting vote. And yet, although so directly in the face of its history and letter, we are unceasingly told that this fugitive servant clause applies to slaves. Shame to those who tell the impudent falsehood, and shame to those who believe them!

I cannot leave this clause without adding one more proof that the Convention did not intend to have it apply to slaves. It is admitted that there is much historical proof that the apportionment clause in the Constitution, as well as its clause on migration and importation, refers to slaves. Now the Constitution positively forbids that the latter clause shall be amended before the year 1808, and, in effect, positively forbids that the former, so far as it relates to Slavery, shall be amended before that time. In other words, the Constitution provides that Slavery shall until 1808—the expected time of its death—not fail to have the benefits of these two clauses. In studying the Constitution at this point for yourselves, you will, of course, remember that at that time the forbidding of capitation and direct taxes was tantamount to the forbidding of all means to defray the expenses of Government.

But if the Constitution was so made as to prohibit the amending of itself in these respects during that period, which was looked upon as the whole lifetime of Slavery, why was not the prohibition extended to the fugitive servant clause also? If the framers of the Constitution intended that this clause should authorize the recapture of fugitive slaves; if, as it is persistingly represented, they intended it to be "one of the Proslavery compromises of the Constitution," why then was not the amendment of this clause as well as the others forbidden? There can be but one reasonable explanation. *The Convention did not purpose the application of the clause to slaves.* Whatever two or three of the members may have hoped from its operation—however confident they may have been that they had succeeded in smuggling Slavery into it—there is no ground for believing that the great body of the Convention expected that the clause would be used for recovering fugitive slaves. In point of fact not one slave was taken back under it until many years after—not until Slavery had to no small extent come to be regarded as a permanent system, and the price of slaves had risen accordingly.

And there is still one other reason why we should believe that the framers of the Constitution did not intend to help Slavery live, and why we should believe that they committed themselves to no guiltier policy—guilty I admit it was—than that of allowing the dying demon a few years in which to die. It is, that to believe the contrary involves them in the greatest hypocrisy. They began the Constitution with the solemn declaration that they intended it to "secure the blessings of liberty;" and when they had finished it, and were about to submit it to the people, they unanimously struck from it the word "servitude," and supplied its place with service, for the avowed reason that servitude denotes the condition of slaves, and service the obligations of freemen. For one, I am not prepared to call them hypocrites, as all virtually do who impute to them Pro-Slavery purposes.

I will, at this stage of my remarks, speak of the Proslavery interpretations of the Constitution by Antislavery men. Coming from such a source, they are peculiarly pernicious. The mass of the American people are worshipers of the Constitution. They recognize no higher authority. For Anti-Slavery men, therefore, to tell them it is Proslavery, is to bring them under a mighty influence to uphold Slavery. Most lamentable, therefore, is it that so many of these sincere lovers of freedom should be taxing their ingenuity to prove that the Constitution is Proslavery. I have often wondered why certain distinguished Antislavery prints should persist in their Proslavery construction of the Constitution, and in thereby giving such abundant comfort and efficient help to the enemy. Is it because they feel the obligations of honor and courtesy? But never were honor and courtesy less called for. No such comparatively petty considerations—no such social conventionalisms—are so much as to be thought of, when everlasting justice is laying her sternest commands upon us, and is bidding us draw up our poor brother out of the pit of Slavery, and deal faithfully with the crime of putting and keeping him there.

Great folly and great wrong are they guilty of, who allow honor and courtesy, or any other considerations, to tempt them to trample on the canon of interpretation for the sake of sheltering the greatest crime. Of this folly and wrong was one of these prints guilty when a few weeks ago it went into history for proof that the words, "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law," are not a limitation on State as well as Federal powers. What right had it to serve the most flagrant form of injustice at the expense of the established rules of legal interpretation? We may go into history to help a law speak for Justice, but never to help it speak for Injustice. Injustice can claim nothing from a law, save from its surface and obvious letter. Justice may wring all it can from law—Injustice nothing. Now, this print knows as well as we do, that the language of the Constitution in the present case is just as applicable to a State as to the Nation—just as much fitted to impose restrictions and negations upon the one as upon the other. It knows as well as we do, that the Constitution is as obviously a paper for limiting the powers of a State Government, as those of the Federal Government.

Lest what I have said should be construed into my admission that the voice of history at this point is on the side of Slavery, I expressly deny that it is. This print can hardly have read the Congressional discussions on the Amendments of the Constitution. Let it read them; and it will then be better able to judge of the history of the Amendments. Especially instructed will it be by Mr. Madison's wise words in favor of restraints upon State as well as national sovereignty.

But the fault of these intellectual and accomplished editors to whom I have referred, is not alone that they allow themselves to be swayed by honor and courtesy in a case where there is no room for honor and courtesy. Their even greater fault is in still according rights to Slavery. Slavery has no rights, unless it be that single right of every wolf—the right to be killed. Instead of a party to be respected and treated with, it is a mere piracy. Instead of being a law, it is an outlaw. With all their Antislavery feeling, and all their love of justice, and all their appreciation of human rights, they seem never yet to have taken the gauge and dimensions of the black man's manhood. With them white manhood still appears to be one thing, and black manhood another. Not yet do they seem to have so far escaped from the general prejudices as to identify the rights and interests of a black man with those of a white one. Think you that they would go into history, or anywhere else, for such interpretations of law as would help fasten the yoke of Slavery on the necks of their white countrymen? Let them say in their columns that there might possibly be a legal enslavement of their white countrymen, and that they would recognize, honor and defend it as law, and they would quickly lose all their subscribers, unless it might be here and there a Hunker Democrat, or fossil Whig, or *New-York Observer* parson.

How great is the force, how blinding is the influence of habit! These editors would strenuously resist all such interpretations as would serve to cheat them out of a favorite dog; and yet they cannot break out of the editorial habit of going here and there—into this forbidden place and that—to hunt up legal interpretations which justify the slaveholder, and enable him to keep on cheating his fellow-men out of all their rights, and even out of themselves.

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One of the newspapers in question claims that we are estopped from giving an Antislavery interpretation to the Constitution, by the fact that hitherto a Proslavery interpretation has so generally been given to it. But on this same principle it might arrest every reform, even the Antislavery reform, which, to its everlasting honor, it did itself begin. Thank Heaven! the slave has lost none of his rights by *non user;* and we have lost none of our pleas for him by *non user;* and if in the juster knowledge of human rights and juster interpretations of law, which are coming to obtain in our day, the Constitution is seen to be not for Slavery but for Liberty, then will we wield it for the deliverance of the slave, even though it were true that it has hitherto been always wielded for his destruction. "*Nullum tempus occurrit regi.*" But if the king should lose no right by the lapse of time, much more should not the slave. If, now, at the last, the Constitution is dug up out of the big heap of Proslavery falsehoods in which it has long lain buried, and is found to be full of the principles of Liberty, and utterly destitute of all countenance to Slavery, then, now at the last, by all our high responsibilities to the slave and to Heaven, we will use the precious instrument to procure his freedom.

Let me here say that Freedom can bear any other opposition better than this, which she encounters in the home of her friends. She can bear to be opposed by the current religion of the country, for the people [illegible] conventional and spurious religion, which mixes itself up with Slavery, instead of sternly demanding its extinction. She can bear to be opposed by the Democratic party, which, Aaron like, has sold itself to work evil, or by such Republicans as are Freedom to serve party. But the one thing that Freedom cannot bear is to have Antislavery men, Antislavery leaders, the most distinguished and influential Antislavery newspapers, at work to rob the poor and powerless slave of the Constitution and give it to the proud and powerful slaveholder. Oh! if there is anything that belongs to the slave, it is this paper, which our fathers would not consent to stain with the word "slavery," and which they were determined should go down to posterity with a clean and fair face for liberty. * * * * * * * * * * * * *

After all, we should not be surprised at it. The writer of that article has evidently embraced the theory of the slaveholders and of the sham Democratic party, that the American people are still a confederation of States rather than a Nation; and that their attempt to escape from the one condition to the other was abortive. On the industrious efforts to propagate this theory is the great reliance for warding off destruction from Slavery, and resisting all interference with it. So far as his political action against Slavery is concerned, we have very little to hope for from him who is so unfortunate as to receive this false and mischievous theory. He will feel no national responsibility for Slavery, for he will deny that he is under any. The fearful words of Heaven regarding national sins will inspire him with no alarm so far as American Slavery is concerned. If, too, Georgia should enact that one half her male or one half her female children shall be put to death, he would wash his hands of all political responsibility for it. He would pronounce it the concern of no other nation but the nation of Georgia. I admit that it is of comparatively few crimes in the States that the Federal Government is to take cognizance. But of these few is Slavery. The words of the Constitution, the necessities of government, the indispensable terms of our Union, and of our continued national existence, absolutely forbid Slavery.

The chief reason of this writer for holding that we are a confederacy rather than a nation, is that the members of the Convention for framing the Constitution were chosen by the States, and that the Constitution was submitted to and acted on by the States. But besides that convenience dictated this arrangement, it was absolutely necessary. For who else than the people of a State could have authority to withdraw any part of the power hitherto exercised by their State Government? and who else than the people of such State could have any part in conferring such withdrawn power upon the newly-created National or Federal Government?

No, the Constitution is not the work of sovereign States, but of the American people. It was the American people who decided to have a General Government; and no less was it the American people who decided to have State Governments. The duties of the State Government were assigned, and its bounds established, just as fully by the whole American people as were those of the General Government. The one nation, which they agreed to become, they also agreed should be governed partly by the machinery of State Governments, and partly by that of the General Government.

Let not the thorough State-Rights men (of whom I claim to be one) be offended at this view. It does not follow from our being one nation that the State Governments are necessarily subordinate to the General Government. They may be co-ordinate with it. Nor does it follow that appeals lie from the State to the Federal Courts. Each in its sphere may be independent of the other.

I have said much to you in praise of the Constitution. Let it not be inferred, however, that I claim for it the first place in your hearts. Among all State papers, such pre-eminence belongs to the Declaration of Independence. They greatly exaggerate the merits of the Constitution who see in it the origin of the Union. As it does itself declare, it was made "in order to form a more perfect Union." The Union already existed. It had been entered into even before 1776. It was, however, the Paper of that memorable year—the noblest political paper ever sent over the world—that was the first to set forth, formally and authoritatively, the reasons why the American Colonies should become one nation; and the first thus to set forth the sublime and mighty principles which were to vitalize and forever govern that nation. This is the paper which deserves to be called the first Constitution of our country; for it is the first in the order of time and the first in the degree of authority. One of the eminent statesmen (Gen. Root) of my State pronounced it "the fundamental law of the land:" and another (John C. Spencer) declared it to be "above all Constitutions and all laws." The Federal Constitution should be interpreted in the light of the Declaration of Independence. But alas! in these degenerate days, that Constitution, with all its Proslavery interpretations, is blindly worshipped, and the great and heavenly principles of the Declaration of Independence are ridiculed as "a fanfaronade of nonsense," and as "glittering generalities." The Constitution, instead of being used to disparage and make void the Declaration of Independence, should rather be viewed as supplemental to it, and as serving to carry out into detail the broad and precious principles of that first and greatest Constitution. Our fathers could have had no possible right to contravene or slight those principles. Had they, when making and adopting the Constitution, been guilty of overlooking or in any wise dishonoring them, they would therein have been guilty of the most infamous treason toward all their countrymen who had expended treasure or period life to establish them, and also toward the good La Fayette and the other gallant foreigners whom those principles had attracted to our shores.

I spoke of the principles of the Declaration of Independence. Prominent among them is that which asserts that "all men are created equal." This principle is the very soul of the Declaration of Independence; and being therefore the very soul of the Constitution, it instantly annihilates all possible Proslavery interpretations of that instrument. I do not forget that, according to Chief Justice Taney's recent discovery, black men did not come within the scope of this principle, and were not a part of "all men." Nevertheless, they were men, and they voted and fought by the side of those who affirmed that "all men are created equal." Why, then, does the Chief Justice exclude them? The words of the Declaration of Independence do not intimate their exclusion. What rules of interpretation are there to authorize him to go away from the plain meaning of these plain words for the purpose of fastening the cruelest wrong upon the black man, and of involving the fathers in the deepest and basest and most hypocritical injustice? There are none. In gross violation of the rules of legal interpretation, at the expense of blackening the fame of the fathers, and at the expense of outraging all the rights and murdering all the manhood of his equal brothers, has the Chief Justice undertaken to show that our fathers, when speaking of "all men," did not mean all men. And all this has he done notwithstanding the fathers spoke so evidently with philosophical precision, and notwithstanding, too, that they spoke with religious solemnity, and called God to witness their sincerity. But our fathers know as well as we do that all parts of the human brotherhood are equally dear to the great heart of their common Maker. Were they, then, such brazen-faced hypocrites as to dare appeal to His knowledge of their conscious rectitude, when all the while they were guilty of the mental reservation which the Chief Justice imputes to them?—guilty of deliberately excluding a portion of their fellow-men from the equal rights of all men?—guilty of denying that God has sent that portion into the world with rights equal to those of other men? * * * * * * * * *

I said that I came here to beseech you to know no law for Slavery; but to trample under foot whatever claims to be a law for Slavery. I honor your intelligent Judiciary for declaring the Fugitive Slave Act unconstitutional. I honor Wisconsin for standing bravely by her brave Judiciary. A good and glorious example is all this. But I am here to call on you for a still better and more glorious example. Wisconsin—both her people and her Judges—must know no law, nor admit the possibility of any law, for Slavery. A statute may be in favor of Slavery; a Constitution—even the idolized Federal Constitution—may be in favor of Slavery; but the voice of all Wisconsin must be, that Slavery is too repugnant to justice and humanity, to reason and religion, to be capable of wearing any, even the least, semblance of law.

Men of Wisconsin! you know that what I am claiming at your hands is simply your duty; and I cannot doubt that you will joyfully confess the duty. How blessed and how numerous will be the results of your faithfully discharging it!

There will then be no more fugitive slaves in Wisconsin; for the moment they shall touch your soil, they will cease to be slaves. That moment they will be transmuted from chattels into men. It follows, that there will be no more prosecutions in your State for helping fugitive slaves; for you will not fail to make such prosecutions quite too perilous to be ventured upon. Your Booths and other good men will no more be harassed and plundered for having shown mercy to their helpless, outraged, innocent brethren. No more will they be made criminals for doing that which endears them to the heart of God, and of every right-minded man. * * * * * * * * *

Then, too, in your shutting out the Slave Power from your State, and all law for Slavery, you will give the only honest, consistent and effectual answer to the denial of citizenship to the black man by a portion of the Supreme Court of the United States. That denial is a perfectly logical deduction from the assumption that he is fit to be the subject of merchandise and to wear the yoke of Slavery. Hence it is utterly vain, not to say hypocritical also, for any who hold that the black man can be property, and his enslavement lawful, to arraign the justice or wisdom of this denial. For why should they who, though having the appearance of men, are in fact but fit to be cast into the category of chattels—why should they, any more than horses, be accounted fit for the dignity and honor of citizenship? No, it is the taking issue with Slavery itself, and denying that it can have any right or any law—it is this which constitutes the only proper answer to the denial of citizenship to the black man. * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Among the most valuable results of your ignoring all law for Slavery will be the preparation of your way to grow in the knowledge of true law—a knowledge inferior to no other in its happy influence upon the character. To whatever extent you are now guilty of recognizing in Slavery the name and obligations of law, and of thus according to the very worst thing the same name and obligations due to the very best—to that extent do you now trifle with, and twist, and blunt your moral nature. But when you shall have come to identify law with right, and to acknowledge nothing to be law which is not right—though I readily admit that there are many violations of right, and therefore many illegalities, which it is better to bear with than resist—then you will have entered a law-school, in which wisdom and goodness grow as constantly as do folly and wickedness outside of it; a law-school in which, under the teachings of true law, the mind expands as rapidly as it becomes dwarfed when under the influence of those conventional legalities which lack all the great elements and all the soul of true law.

I will mention but one other of the precious results of your branding Slavery as an outlaw and consecrating every foot of your soil to Freedom, and promising as full protection to the fugitive slave who steps upon it as to any other innocent person within your borders. You will then be a free State, which I dare not yet say you are. You will then have a State Government which I dare not yet say you have. Certain it is that a State is not free, and has not a government, so long as it acknowledges the paramount rule of Slavery. That is not worthy of the name of government which does not promise protection to all the innocent within its jurisdiction—to the least black baby as well as to the loftiest white aristocrat.

Peterboro, August 27, 1859.

John Thomas, Esq., Syracuse,
Chairman of Jerry Rescue Committee,

My dear Sir,

I have this day received your letter inviting me to preside at the approaching Anniversary of the Rescue of Jerry, and to prepare the papers for it. Thankful for this honor as I truly am, nevertheless I am constrained to decline it. I have presided at all the Anniversaries of this important event, and written the Address adopted at each of them. But my interest in them has declined greatly for the last two or three years: and I am now decidedly of the opinion that it is unwise to continue to repeat the farce any longer.

The Rescue of Jerry was a great and glorious event. Would God it had been duly improved! But those who achieved it, and I include in this number all who cheered it on and rejoiced in every step of its progress, have, with few exceptions, proved themselves unworthy of the work of their own hands. We delivered Jerry in the face of the authority of Congress and Courts; and, as most of us believed, in contempt also of a provision of the Constitution itself. We delivered him, believing that there was no law and could be no law for slavery. On that occasion our humanity was up; and in vain would all the authorities on earth, even the bible itself included, have bid it down. Our humanity owned Jerry for its brother: and so did it cling to him, that all the wealth of the world would not have sufficed to buy it off, or tempt it to ignore and betray him.

Oh had the thousands, who on that memorable night crowded the streets of Syracuse, but maintained the sublime elevation to which the spirit of that night exalted them, what a force for the overthrow of slavery would they not have accumulated by this time! But they soon fell from it. They soon sunk down to the low level of their political and church parties. Jerry was forgotten. Their humanity was dead:—for these parties are the grave of humanity. In proportion as a man becomes a partisan is his manhood lost:—for in that proportion is he untrue to himself, to his brother, and to God. That day, alas how distant! when every one shall be held, and be willing to be held, to his individuality, shall witness an unspeakably better condition of things than does this in which men act in parties, and stand in the strength of parties; and in which the vaguely and feebly felt responsibilities of party take the place of the definite and deeply conscious responsibilities of the individual. When our countrymen shall have risen to this higher plane of character there will be christians instead of Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians; and patriots instead of Republicans, Democrats, and Native Americans.

Of the thousands, who, on the glorious night to which we have referred, were actuated by justice and mercy, probably not less than nineteen twentieths fell immediately after under those ecclesiastical or political party influences which had previously swayed and shrivelled them. Of the thousands whose motto that glorious night was: "No law for slavery," perhaps not a dozen have called on their churches to adopt it, and not fifty have persoveringly refused to vote for men who recognize a law for slavery. At each of our Anniversaries the Resolutions and Address and the discussions upon them have been in harmony with the high and holy principles on which Jerry was rescued. Nevertheless the vast majority of those who enjoyed the Anniversaries returned home to act with their proslavery parties in Church and State.

"Jerry Rescuers" voting for men who acknowledge a law for slavery! I see not but that they are as basely inconsistent as are our Temperance Societies, forty nine fiftieths of the members of which, whilst praying for "Prohibition," vote for candidates who oppose it. Indeed, always excepting an Anniversary of the New-York State Temperance Society, I do not know a greater or more shameless or more pernicious hypocrisy than an Anniversary of the Rescue of Jerry.

By the way I see that a gentleman of fine talents and high culture and marked ability as a writer, is called on to write the history of the Temperance Reformation. For my own part I had far rather that this history were hidden than published. For, if truthfully written, what is the great fact it will perpetuate?—what but the infinitely disgraceful one that the Temperance men, though ever ready to talk up and write up their cause, were as ever ready to vote it down? The cause of Temperance in this country is dead. In vain all the efforts of Temperance Societies and Temperance Newspapers and Temperance Lecturers to galvanize it into life. Never was the use of tobacco and intoxicating drinks increasing so rapidly. All who have any discernment must see that it is this boundless inconsistency and unprincipledness at the ballot box, which has killed this dear cause; and that it can never be revived by Temperance Societies and Temperance Newspapers and Temperance Lecturers that go for the election of rum drinkers. Such stupendous and shameless hypocrisies must give place to agencies characterized by sincerity and self-denial before Temperance can come to life.

Oh no, let not the history of either the Temperance cause or the Anti-Slavery cause be written with the view of honoring their professed friends. They have both been killed at the ballot box by those friends. If written at all, let it be with the purpose of warning the world against hypocrisies.

To return from this digression, let me, my friend, again say that we had better give up the celebration of the Rescue of Jerry. The thing is quite too great and good for us. Earnest and honest men are alone suited to it. We Jerry Rescuers are mean men and sham men. Dear Jerry's sainted spirit can take no pleasure in this our grand annual hypocrisy. The Savior, whom he so heartily chose and so faithfully followed in his last years, can have no sympathy with it. The cause of freedom is disgraced and hindered, instead of being honored and promoted by it.

Let us stand aside:—and then perhaps consistent men and honest men and high-souled men will ere long come up to take our place. One of the most beautiful scenes that could bless my sight would be a Jerry Rescue Anniversary conducted by men who would as soon stay in a brothel as in a church that recognizes a law for slavery; and who would as soon vote for men who recognize a law for sheep-stealing, as for men who acknowledge that a judicial decree or a statute or even a Constitution, can create any obligation to protect and honor man-stealing.

In short let us who talk well against slavery stand aside for those who will vote well against it. Let our professions make room for their practice, and our hypocrisy for their sincerity.

Men make light of the crime of voting wrong:—and yet there is no other crime so full of the heaviest oppression. Quite bad enough is it when, in my private or individual dealings with my fellow man, I oppress him. But when I vote against his rights, as I do when I vote for candidates, who hold that there may be a valid and obligatory and real law for his slavery, or who

hold that there can be such a law for dram-selling, such a law for making and keeping him a drunkard—then I vote to array the Government and the collective people against him—then I vote not that I may wrong him, not that I, with such comparatively insignificant powers as an individual can summon, may oppress him—but that a whole State, a whole nation, may fall upon him and crush him. Churches and parties may be stone-blind to it—nevertheless Heaven sees that this voting against human rights and this voting temptations in the way of the weak, constitute the mightiest wrong that men are capable of perpetrating.

Much is said and written against the breaking of human laws. But they are entitled to obedience only so far as they are one with those Divine laws which cannot be broken. "The law of his God" was Daniel's only law. No friend of God knows any other law. Apostles answered and said: "we ought to obey God rather than men:"—so too: "whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." How conscious and wicked is this declamation against trampling under foot these human laws, that are no laws. To such trampling are the nations indebted for the instances of their greatest progress. Often indeed have the nations found it their only salvation. How shameless the hypocrisy of our country-men! Whilst glorying in the historical fact that our fathers were ready to take up arms against laws imposing petty taxes on tea and paper, they nevertheless roll up the whites of their eyes in holy horror at refusals to obey laws, if laws they can be called, which sink innocent men women and children in the hell of slavery.

The rescuers of Jerry were called rebels. But the rebellion in the case was chargeable not on them, but on the Government. It was the Government, and not the rescuers, who were guilty of resisting law. The law in the case was the right of every innocent man to his personal liberty. That law the rescuers upheld: and against it did the Government rebel. What if its rebellion was carried on under the forms of law?—none the less was it rebellion.

People are wont to regard every enactment as law. But many an enactment is not law. Squatter Sovereignty is much extolled; and now and then there are signs that even the Republican party is fast coming to acquiesce in it. Nevertheless Squatter Sovereignty is not law. The liberty given by the Nebraska Bill to enslave men was not liberty to set up law, but to put down law—quite as emphatically such as if it had been liberty to murder men. The invasion of human rights by Government can, no more than such invasion by an individual, be law. The invaders be they Governments or individuals are the rebels; and they who resist them are the law-abiding. The passage of the Nebraska Bill afforded ample justification to the people to enter the halls of Congress and hurl the rebels from their seats. A poor chance of any other than a hempen elevation would such rebels stand, were the religion of this country christianity and its politics democracy. As things are, it is the man here and there, who dares to live the christian life on whom the American Church pounces; and it is the little handful of real democrats toward whom American politicians—American democrats—show no mercy.

It is perhaps vain as respects its effect on slavery for me, or for any one else, to remonstrate against voting for those who believe in a law for slavery, or in other words against proslavery voting. It is perhaps too late to bring slavery to an end by peaceable means—too late to vote it down! For many years I have feared and published my fears that it must go out in blood. My Speech in Congress on the Nebraska Bill was strongly marked with such fears. These fears have grown into belief. So debauched are the white people by slavery, that there is not virtue enough left in them to put it down. If I do not misinterpret the words and the looks of the most intelligent and noble of the black men who fall in my way, they have come to despair of the accomplishment of this work by the white people. The feeling among the blacks that they must deliver themselves gains strength with fearful rapidity. They are sensible how cruelly they have been deceived by the Liberty Party, the Free Soil Party, the Republican Party, and [illegible] that mass of even the most loud-mouthed abolitionists. They see that all these, instead of voting slavery down, have voted [illegible] True, the Republican Party did not promise them much. But they did not expect it would insult and exasperate them by taking the name of "The white man's party." They did hope for some help from this Party. But they got none. It lifts not a finger to repeal the Fugitive Slave Act; nor to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia; nor to abolish the inter-State traffic in human flesh. Nay, it goes so far as to admit that the slavery of black men (it would not dare admit it in the case of but one white man) can be legalized in every State of the Union. The Dred Scott Decision and the reopening of the African slave trade are proofs that slavery has never strengthened itself so rapidly as during the existence of this new and misnamed Republican Party.

The Republican writers and orators declaim much against the obvious purpose of the Slave Power to overspread the Free States with slavery by the help of its "natural ally" the Northern Democracy. But do not these writers and orators admit the right to do this when they admit the legality of slavery in the Slave States? What is property in Virginia is by a law above human enactments property in Vermont also. He who is a slave or property in Mississippi is a slave or property in Massachusetts also. What is property any where is property everywhere. Moreover, it will in the end be found to be as vain as it is inconsistent, to oppose the extension of slavery into the Free States, whilst upholding it in the Slave States. Gov. Seward was right in saying that the States must ultimately be all secured to freedom or given up to slavery. But he did not see that his standing by slavery in the Slave States rendors unavailing his opposition to its extension into the Free States. Gov. Seward can do nothing to prevent slavery's going where it is not, unless he holds it to be a piracy and an outlaw where it is.

No wonder then is it that in this state of facts which I have sketched, intelligent black men in the States and Canada should see no hope for their race in the practice and policy of white men. No wonder they are brought to the conclusion that no resource is left to them but in God and insurrections. For insurrections then we may look any year, any month, any day. A terrible remedy for a terrible wrong! But come it must unless anticipated by repentance and the putting away of the terrible wrong.

It will be said that these insurrections will be failures—that they will be put down. Yes, but will not slavery nevertheless be put down by them? For what portions are there of the South that will cling to slavery after two or three considerable insurrections shall have filled the whole South with horror? And is it entirely certain that these insurrections will be put down promptly, and before they can have spread far? Will telegraphs and railroads be too swift for even the swiftest insurrections? Remember that telegraphs and railroads can be rendered useless in an hour. Remember too that many, who would be glad to face the insurgents, would be busy in transporting their wives and daughters to places where they would be safe from that worst fate which husbands and fathers can imagine for their wives and daughters. I admit that but for this embarrassment Southern men would laugh at the idea of an insurrection, and would quickly dispose of one. But trembling as they would for their beloved ones, I know of no part of the world where, so much as in the South, men would be like, in a formidable insurrection, to lose the most important time, and be distracted and panic-stricken.

When the day of her calamity shall have come to the South, and fire and rape and slaughter shall be filling up the measure of her affliction, then will the North have two reasons for remorse—

First, That she was not willing (whatever the attitude of the South at this point) to share with her in the expense and loss of an immediate and universal emancipation.

Second, That she was not willing to vote slavery out of existence.

Then too when, alas, it will be too late, will be seen in the vivid light of the sufferings of our Southern brethren both black and white, how shameful and of what evil influence was the apostacy of those "Jerry Rescuers," who were guilty of falling from the "Jerry level," and casting proslavery votes.

But why should I have spoken of the sorrows that await the South? Whoever he may be that foretells the horrible end of American Slavery is held both at the North and the South to be a lying prophet—another Cassandra. The South would not respect her own Jefferson's prediction of servile insurrection. How then can it be hoped that she will respect another's? If the South will not, with her own Jefferson, "tremble" when reflecting that "God is just":—if she will not see with her own Jefferson that "the Almighty has no attribute which can take side with" her in "a contest" with her slaves—then who is there either North or South that is capable of moving her fears and helping her to safety?

Respectfully your friend

GERRIT SMITH.

LETTER FROM GERRIT SMITH ON TEMPERANCE.

TO THE THOUGHTFUL AND CANDID OF THE COUNTY OF MADISON.

At the Town-Meeting yesterday the ticket of the Republicans in this town received, in general, very nearly twice as many votes, and that of the Democrats more than half as many, as did the Anti-dramshop ticket. The battle, as was to be expected, was on Supervisor. Our candidate had 156 votes; the Republican 62; and the Democratic 37. It is but proper, however, to add that our candidate would have received far less votes, had the Republicans been well united on their respectable and truly worthy candidate.

Most of our friends here are exultant—but I, whose old age recalls more of the past, am still despondent. For, in the light of the past, I still strongly incline to the conclusion that the dramshop is to be suffered to work the ruin of our beloved country. A few of us (now nearly all gone) began, forty-five years ago, the work of ridding our little town of dramshops. We succeeded—but not till after toiling for success fifteen years. Now, for about thirty years we have had no licensed dramselling: and, during these thirty years, much has been said and done to keep our people awake to the sin and suffering of intemperance. Nevertheless, as the vote of yesterday shows, even in this famous temperance town "there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." We have still farmers (they are however few) who covet the profits (far more imaginary than real) of furnishing materials for intoxicating drinks; and nearly all our politicians with their duped followers still cling to the dramshop parties. If then, notwithstanding all the efforts in our town for the cause of temperance, no more has been accomplished, how can we hope for the success of that cause elsewhere? Where else have there been such efforts?

The cause of temperance has many foes. One of the greatest is the Temperance Societies. Were they all blotted out, there would be reason to hope that we might succeed in voting the dramshop to death. These Societies with their songs and stories, and with their newspapers and tracts, that so cunningly dodge the duty of political action, are the accepted substitute for such voting. Let an audience weep and laugh for an hour under the marvellous dramatic power of a Gough, and it will be quite unfitted for a manly effort against rum. In all probability they can never again be toned and braced up to vote against it. One temperance sermon or temperance speech from a Doctor of Divinity, who condemns, or so much as ignores, political action against dramselling, will suffice to make those who hear it self-satisfied for a whole year in their rum-party connexions. So, too, the new style of Temperance Societies which, with so great a flourish of trumpets, they are getting up in Boston, New York, Washington and elsewhere, will do much to perpetuate the dramshop. These Societies, which allow men to continue to vote for rum, if only they will continue to talk against it, cannot fail to increase the public contempt for temperance. By the way, these Societies would not deal so indulgently with such comparative peccadilloes as theft and forgery, as they do with the crime of dramselling—that great source of all crimes. They do not propose to make talk and prayer the only weapons of their war even upon *them*. Oh, shamelessly inconsistent ones, how much rather would you have the thief and forger rob your son of all his property than have him victimized, body and soul, by the dramseller!

And let me add, just here, that it will never do to make the dramseller's money-payment for the damage he does to this and that family his only punishment. No one thinks of letting off the forger or thief in this wise. No one thinks of having the laws, which absolutely forbid the crime of forgery or theft repealed: and no one should be content with anything short of such absolute forbidding of the far greater crime of dramselling. The people need to be educated into a sense of the criminality of dramselling. But how can they ever be, so long as the Temperance Societies, the politicians and the priests blind and confuse them by voting the tickets of dramselling parties? It is from their lack of this sense of the criminal character of dramselling that the people favor the proposition to allow each town to decide whether it will or will not have dramsellers. To be consistent they should be in favor of leaving it to each town to decide whether it will harbor thieves and forgers.

Nothing, however, at the present time, stands so much in the way of the success of the cause of temperance as the fear cherished by tens of thousands of good men that quitting the Republican for the Anti-dramshop party would result in throwing the nation into the hands of the Democratic party. Thirty years ago, it was clear to some of us that Slavery must go out in blood unless the people would consent to vote it to death. For fifteen or twenty years this testimony was carried into many parts of the country. Even in Congress it was not withheld. But we "seemed as one that mocked"; and our testimony was both unheeded and derided. The anti-slavery men kept urging the Whig party to adopt the anti-slavery principle—but it, in turn, kept fearing that it would thereby bring the Democratic party into the ascendency. At last, however, when its constantly reduced numbers had become too small to save it from despair, it was ready to join the anti-slavery men in organizing a new party. This new party, the Republican, went on rapidly to victory. But it was organized too late to save the nation from being broken up by slavery and to save slavery from going out in blood. We, of course, made no overtures to the Democratic party. Fifty years ago, the Democratic Party was the progressive or reform party. To it we were indebted for "universal suffrage" and many other good things. But, alas, our modern Democratic party, so utterly unlike, save in name, the former one, had become fatally entangled with slavery, and had sunk down into a hopeless pro-slavery, caste-spirit conservatism—hopeless then, as it is hopeless now. There were anti-slavery men in its ranks—but we had not the least encouragement to believe that the *party* could be brought to oppose slavery. Its leaders then gave, as they have ever since continued to give, a downward lead to the party.

The Republican party is far from being in all respects what we would have it to be. It, also, is a dramshop party—though not to the extent that the Democratic party is. It is, however, a great improvement upon its predecessor, the Whig party. Nay, it is, "to this, Hyperion to a Satyr." And it is so because whilst the Whig party was cold, calculating and heartless, the Republican party warmed and humanized itself with the inspirations of the great moral and humanitarian ideas, which it did not shrink to espouse. It was its adoption of these ideas, which gave it the power to conquer. When it undertook to abolish slavery, and afterwards to enfranchise the negro, it did not pause to inquire whether it might not thereby bring the nation under Democratic rule. It did not take counsel of its fears—but, trusting in truth and in the God of truth, it went fearlessly on to

triumph. The freedmen owe much to the Republican party for their freedom. But the dramshops which Republicans equally with Democrats spread all over the South, are destroying the freedmen and threatening to make their freedom a greater curse than was even their slavery. Better for a man to be a sober slave than to yield to the temptation to become a drunken freeman. And who can measure the crime of those that present the temptation?

As death came upon the Whig party because it would not adopt our anti-slavery principle, so death is now threatening the Republican party because it will not espouse our opposition to dramselling. In vain was it that the Whig party saw slavery destroying the nation. In vain is it that the Republican party sees dramselling debasing the people and fitting them for anarchy and despotism. In vain that it sees a million of drunkards in the land and also the innumerable hard drinkers, who are not yet called drunkards, and sees, every year, fifty thousand of our youth join themselves to the great army of drunkards. In vain is it that it sees our cities and large villages constantly becoming more and more clusters of dramshops, and, from the rapid increase in their population whilst that of the rural districts is stationary, carrying well-nigh all the elections. In vain is it that they see what a power to control the nation is the thousand millions in it invested in the rum traffic, and the liquor leagues extending all over the country, and binding its members not to vote for temperance men nor patronize their business. All this it sees—nevertheless all this does not suffice to wean it from its infatuated reliance on dramshop votes.

Surely, our free institutions which intelligent, sober, virtuous voters are alone capable of sustaining, cannot exist much longer, if this their great foe is suffered to exist much longer. Perhaps, this dramshop demoralization and debasement have already gone fatally far. Perhaps, if the Republican party were now to come forth against dramselling, it would be too late to save the nation. But what less can it do than try to save it?—May be that, ere long, it would have the help of woman's vote to save it.

The Republican party is now the rival of the Democratic party for the favor of the dramshop. Let it quit this mean rivalry, and give up the dramshop exclusively to the Democratic party. Thus brave and upright for the truth, it will have, at least, its rich deserving of success as a ground for expecting success. Continuing on the dramshop plane, where it now is along with the Democratic party, it cannot fail to be conquered. For on that low plane, where the Democratic party is more at home than its rival, it is necessarily more powerful than its rival. The Republican party can conquer only in its own sphere of high moral and philanthropic ideas. It falls from this sphere when it succumbs to the dramshop, and refuses to add opposition to dramselling—opposition to the manufacturing of drunkards, madmen and murderers—to its stock of great and inspiring ideas. The Republican party knows from its own instructive experience, that grand success awaits the party, which does not shrink from accepting the rich and sublime truths which Providence tenders to it. It should, also, know that if it shall ever deliberately and persistingly refuse to accept any of them, especially such a vital truth as that Government is bound to suppress dramselling, it will then give up its life, and lie down to die of the falsehoods, which it has basely and wickedly preferred to these truths.

GERRIT SMITH.

PETERBORO March 8 1871.

THE WEST POINT MOB.

[BY GERRIT SMITH.]

Nothing else is so frightful as a mob—that many-headed monster, whose every head refuses to be controlled. Mobs and their dramshop inspiration threaten the ruin of our country. Ours is emphatically the country of mobs. Slavery made it such. All over the land lawless slavery was served by lawless mobs, until in 1861 came the crowning mob. Well may the Rebellion be called such, since all the worst elements or features of mobocracy characterized it. The Rebellion was simply slavery-in-arms; and slavery-in-arms is, like every other great mob, hell-broke-loose. Slavery has passed away—but its spirit still lingers amongst us, and still with the help of the dramshop, manifests itself in mobs. Every day we hear of them in one and another part of the Southern States—and they are often naked murders on a large scale. Not unfrequently do we hear of them in the Northern States also. But whether the mobs be at the South or at the North, the pro-slavery education of the country goes far to account for them. The mobs, occurring now and then at West Point, are to be counted neither as Southern nor Northern, but as strictly national—the mobocrats in these instances being supported, educated, owned by the nation. Neither Northern nor Southern mobs, however, partake more largely than do these of the spirit of slavery.

The recent mob at West Point will, if honestly traced to its sources, be found, I have little doubt, to be especially the product of that caste-spirit, which grows so rankly out of slavery. The mob flattered itself that to get rid of its three young victims upon the charge of lying would facilitate the getting rid of the brave colored cadet against whom a similar charge is trumped up. That this mob was prompted by high and honorable motives is a mere pretense. Its affectation of a patriotic, not to say pious concern for the cause of truth is silly and impudent to the last degree. Of what, at the worst, were any of the lads guilty? Of nothing more than one of those petty dissemblings, which occur in nearly all schools, and which, as they proceed from no ill will, are mildly dealt with. But the lying of which these men-grown mobocrats were guilty—especially in reporting as deserters those, whom they had themselves kidnapped—was not slightly wicked, and was also exceedingly heartless and cruel.

In mitigation of the crime of the kidnappers it is said that they were guilty of no violence upon the persons of their victims. The highwayman has seldom occasion to shoot. Simply holding a pistol to his ear suffices, in most cases, to bring the remonstrant to terms, and produce the surrender of his purse. So, too, the fear of what might follow from their venturing to resist the ruffians was enough to make the poor terrified boys submissive and silent. They knew not what fate awaited them. But they feared the worst at the hands of a gang of men who could take them from their beds and walk them, thinly clad, through the midnight cold, and threaten them, as they went, with tar and feathers. Men, circumstanced as were these lads, (two of them but seventeen years old and the other only nineteen) might have been able to control their fears, but these dear children could not. I hear that they were not without the fear that they might be hung upon the next tree. It is no small crime to inspire a person, and especially a youthful and therefore timid one, with the fear of being murdered. All the time he fears murder he undergoes murder.

It is, however, alleged that the mobocrats showed their kindness toward the boys in giving them money to help them on their unknown way. But this giving money to them, after having reduced them to straits in which they were compelled to submit to the humiliation of accepting it at the hands of their kidnappers, was the crowning insult.

Many will be the unhappy effects on the outraged lads of the crime perpetrated against them. One will be the spirit of revenge it must necessarily breed and nourish in their hearts. Think you that they will ever forgive their kidnappers? Think you that their parents will? They will, of course, have them punished by the Courts, and, I trust, severely. But that will not suffice to atone for an injury so deep. The revenge will still remain unsatisfied, and will still be calling for retaliation.

The Government has been talking upon this matter of the West Point mob. We have become impatient for its action upon it. Will its action be as thorough and decisive as the case demands? Government has been so dilatory and hesitant in regard to Southern mobs, that we fear it does not dare to grapple with this West Point mob. Southern mobs, because the Government has borne so patiently, if not indeed so pusillanimously with them, have brought the country to the eve of another civil war. The blood of the thousands slain by these mobs has pleaded in vain; the terrors of the living have shrieked in vain; the claim to the whole military power of the nation, if need be, to protect the Union blacks and Union whites, who have put their trust in the good faith of the nation, has been urged in vain. Government still shrinks from encountering these mobs—perhaps from fear, perhaps from what is baser, political party calculations.

God forbid that Government should delay longer to strike for the salvation of the South from mobs! Added to the conclusive reasons for striking *now* is the present opportunity afforded to Government to testify its impartiality and consistency. Thus it will testify if it suppresses its own mob-ruled school. Let it not delay to stamp out the pro-slavery mob spirit at West Point. To do this effectually, it must stamp out the Academy itself—for that spirit, ever fostered in the Academy, inheres in it inoradicably. That spirit trained traitors to officer the Great Rebellion; and the Academy, as long as it shall be permitted to live, will train enemies to republican simplicity and traitors to republican institutions.

I referred to the colored cadet. A very remarkably self-possessed and high-souled youth must he be if he is not driven to rage and even to insanity by the cruel and malignant treatment he receives on account of his connexion with the proscribed and despised race. The pro-slavery caste-spirit, which reigns at West Point, forbids all social intercourse with him. So much as speaking to him would work the forfeiture of the respect and companionship of every white cadet. Is this a school, which the friends of equal rights—the friends of justice and fair play—should longer be taxed to support? No!—it is a school to be indignantly and instantly broken up. Government cannot continue this school without alienating from itself the best portion of the American people—that portion whose moral power is indispensable to its successful administration.

Obviously the first work of Government is not to enlarge our territory either at the South or at the North—but to govern thoroughly, and, where need be, with an iron hand, our present territory. Hence, both the Federal Government and the State Governments are without delay to put an end to mobs and to turn our lawless land into a land of law, that no person and property shall be no longer at the mercy of mobs or any other kindred forms of lawless violence.

But it will be asked—how then, if our national military school is broken up, shall we be able to teach our sons the art of war? To the extent that such teaching is necessary, schools for imparting it will spring up, all over the land. Our colleges will provide a military department, whose pupils, instead of being the proud, arrogant and tyrannical young men into which West Point moulds so large a share of its scholars, will bear themselves as modestly as the pupils of their other departments. Very unlike in spirit will they be to a large share of the young man, who are made exclusive and haughty by belonging to the only national military school. I close with saying that the genius of our institutions requires that Government be permitted to do nothing that the people can do, and that the people be left free to do all they can do. Let the people all over the country be left to educate in schools of generous rivalry with each other the defenders of their whole country; and let this West Point school so prolific of tyrants and ruffians be suppressed, and this far worse than useless drain upon the treasury be stopped.

PETERBORO March 13 1871.

SPEECH OF GERRIT SMITH

(TO HIS NEIGHBORS)

In Peterboro, N. Y., June 22d 1872.

The Democratic Party is my dread. The Republican Party is my hope. What is this party of which I am so much afraid? I need not say that it is not the original Democratic Party—the party of my childhood and youth. That was a worthy party—a party for human rights and human equality. It was the reform party of its day. It favored universal suffrage and the abolition of imprisonment for debt, and many other beneficent changes. But this modern Democratic party,—this degenerate Democratic party—is very unlike the original Democratic party. It is utterly unworthy of the name it has so falsely, not to say so knavishly, assumed. It had, for many years before our accursed Rebellion, sympathized with and served the slave power of our land. Hence, when, a dozen years ago, that mighty power became so infatuated as to fall upon our nation with the purpose of breaking it up entirely and forever, it found the Democratic party ready to help carry this malignant purpose into effect. Indeed, but for the well-known proslavery spirit of that party, the Rebellion would not have been. It was the slave power's reliance on that spirit and on the impliedly, if not in fact expressly, promised aid of tens of thousands of Northern Democratic troops, which supplied what that power lacked of encouragement and boldness to plunge into the Rebellion. When speaking of this degenerate Democratic party, I, of course, do not include in it the thousands of loyal men who, on the breaking out of the Rebellion, forsook it and espoused the cause of their country. All the way through the war, this infamous party continued in more or less active sympathy with the slave power—ever hostile to the emancipation of the slaves; and ever hating and despising the colored race. All the way through the war, it mourned over our successes and rejoiced in our defeats. All the way through the war, it disfavored enlistments in our army, and opposed the drafting of men to fill up our wasting ranks. All the way through it, it did what it could to weaken our national credit both at home and abroad; and to redeem and cripple our means for carrying on the war. And since the war its conduct has been in keeping with its conduct during the war. Repudiation of our national debt, and impossibility that it could ever be paid, when not the cry upon its lips, were still the deep desire of its heart. Despairing of the literal reenslavement of the negro, it went for heaping upon him as much of other injustice and cruelty as was possible. It refused him the right to vote and to be educated. To this day it persists in refusing him his full measure of civil rights and his equality before the law. Worst and most satanic of all, it opposes all effectual legislation for suppressing these Southern Associations, that whip and hang and shoot thousands of innocent blacks, and not a few innocent white men also, who dare stand up for justice to these innocent blacks. Let me here say that nothing surprises and alarms me more than the softened tone in which this hell-born Ku Kluxism is now spoken of in certain quarters where, until quite recently, it was denounced with the utmost vehemence. How great the change, at this point, in even the New York Tribune! Does it but reflect a change in its former eminent editor? How sad, if so! This and a few other newspapers, styling themselves "Liberal Republican" (alas, they are quite too liberal toward this superlative wickedness!) continued, until within a few months, to inveigh against Ku Kluxism as the most horrid of all the crimes of earth. But, now, these newspapers would have us believe that Ku Kluxism was only a little and short lived affair, which has already passed away, leaving peace, harmony and love to supply its place. I admit, that there is, just now, a lull in the storm—but the storm is not yet ended. I admit that, just now, the outbreaks of this matchless wickedness are less frequent, but there are still thousands upon thousands of men and women, who are in constant dread of their recurrence. Let President Grant, who so faithfully executes the laws against Ku Kluxism, withdraw his repressing hand for only a single week, and the flames of hell would again burst out there as furiously as ever, and the whip and halter and bullet be again as busy as ever. It is true that thirty-six persons, convicted of Ku Klux crimes, were sent a few days ago to the Albany Penitentiary, and that hundreds and more nearly thousands of others are now under indictment for such crimes; but the spirit of Ku Kluxism will not die out so long as the Democratic Party exists to sympathize with that spirit. Let us not be deceived by the representation that Ku Kluxism is confined to the "low whites" of the South. Many of the influential Southern Democrats are involved in it. No small proof of this is that not a few of them fled the country as soon as President Grant undertook to enforce the laws against the murderous scoundrels. No wonder that he is unpopular with these scoundrels, and that they prefer for President some softer person than this iron and invincible soldier. Nevertheless, the dread he inspires is just what is needed a few years longer to restrain and subdue this worst element in the population of our country, if not indeed the worst in the whole world. Not only did I consent to have my name at the head of the names to Jefferson Davis's Bail Bond, but, as you are aware, I felt so kindly toward the South, as to be, from the very first, in favor of universal amnesty. When, however, the reign of Ku Kluxism set in, I paused, and doubted whether that portion of our country, which breeds and cherishes such monsters, should receive any more unmerited favors. Heartily did I concur with the motion of our old neighbor, Senator Nye, that the candidates for amnesty be required to purge themselves by their oaths of all participation in Ku Kluxism.

Such, my neighbors, as I have described it, is the Democratic Party. But what occasion had I for describing it? The occasion is the present rekindling of its zeal and renewing of its efforts to get the reins of Government once more into its own hands. But by all that is precious in justice and mercy the Republican Party must be kept in power; and by all that is abhorrent in oppression and cruelty and murder the Democratic party must be kept out of power. It is said, however, that the Democratic Party has been kept out of power a dozen years, and that it is now time to forgive it and to let it try its hand at ruling again. No, it is not! When then will it be time? Never! Never!! What, not if it repent? It cannot repent. It has sinned too long and too deeply to be capable of repentance. It cannot rise up out of the bottomless depths of its political wickedness. As that generation of Israelites which rebelled against Heaven, was shut out from the promised land, so must this generation of impenitent Democrats, of Rebellion-favoring Democrats, of negro hating, negro-whipping, negro-hanging Democrats be forever shut out of power. Time enough will it be for the Democracy to come again into power, when the present Democrats (the youngsters excepted) are all dead. Thankful should our Democrats be that the penalty of their crimes falls but upon themselves and not upon their children also. Thankful should they be that under our merciful Constitution there can be no Bill of Attainder—no disqualifying of children because of the crimes of their parents.

Sad day would it be for the negro if the impenitent, unchanged and unchangeable Democratic Party should come again into the ascendant! God forbid that it shall ever come! Ku Kluxism, now restrained and in process of extinction by the action of the righteous and merciful Republican Party,

would then reappear to repeat its enormities. Whoever reads the Newspapers cannot fail to see that the chief argument, which the Democratic Party relies on to rally opposition to the Republican Party, is the protection from Ku Kluxism, that the Republican Party is affording to the negro.

But may not the Democratic Party be allowed to put up and vote for Republicans? Yes!—but Republicans should, as a general thing, pause long before voting for them. But suppose that Party puts up for President so pronounced and eminent a Republican as Horace Greeley—cannot Republicans consistently vote for him? Certainly not. For his election would as surely be the success of the Democratic Party as the election of President Grant will be the success of the Republican Party. The election of Mr. Greeley will not turn the Democratic Party into a Republican Party—but it will turn him into a Democrat—not, I trust, into one of the worst type—but still into a Democrat. In anticipation of merely his nomination he talked differently about the Tariff from what he had been wont to do: and, instead of continuing to uphold the President's hands in his warfare against Ku Kluxism, he joined himself to those who would palsy them. He had now ten words against the "Carpet baggers" where he had one against the Ku Klux. No, Mr. Greeley's election would not assimilate the Democratic Party to him, but him to it. So it has ever been in such cases—and how, with his kindly and obliging spirit, can he prove an exception? I do not say that Mr. Greeley will set out to be a Democrat; and I admit that he may be largely insensible of the progress of his change. Nevertheless, whether consciously or unconsciously, he will be moulded, and this too at no very slow rate, into harmony with the general views and policies of this great Party, which, as seductively as flatteringly, places him at its head. But what if Mr. Greeley should, notwithstanding his candidacy and election, remain miraculously unchanged?—it does not follow that his election would not be the success of the Democratic Party. The President is not all the Government. Congress is far more nearly all of it: and Mr Greeley's election would be quite like to result in a Democratic Congress. Many of these seceding Republicans will sell their votes to Democratic candidates in exchange for Democratic votes for Mr. Greeley. Unless human nature shall change, the sympathy between these seceding Republicans and the Democratic Party will, all the land over, ripen into open coalitions. The nomination of Mr. Greeley by the Democratic Party—a nomination to be consummated by the Baltimore Convention—is, in effect, a scheme to draw off by this use of his name enough Republicans to turn the scale in favor of Democratic ascendency. I have not spoken to disparage Mr. Greeley. I have no sympathy with the defamation and abuse of him. I am as indignant at his being called a "free lover" as at President Grant's being called a "drunkard." I know him well and esteem him highly. That he has risen by force of his very remarkable talents and many virtues, from poverty and obscurity to his present distinction reflects no small credit both on himself and on our American free institutions. I do not blame him for his aspirations to the Presidency. He means to be, if elected, an honest as well as a wise ruler. I only lament that he had not been content to look for his honors solely to the Republican Party. As the candidate for however high an office at the hands of the Republican Party, I would readily have voted for him. I only lament that he should have sought his honors by lending his name and influence to the Democratic Party, and by damaging and endangering that other Party, which he had served so long and so well. Right here let me answer the question—Where is the Democratic Party to be found? Is it to be found in the recent Cincinnati Convention, or in the approaching Baltimore Convention? It is to be found in both It is to be found wherever war is made upon the Republican Party. To call the handful of Republicans represented in the Cincinnati Convention the Republican Party is absurd. The hope of that Convention was in the Democratic Party. Its candidates are the candidates of the Democratic Party—and are to be beaten as such and not as candidates of the Republican Party. I need say no more of the Democratic Party except to add that patriotism and justice, the love of country and the love of God forbid our voting with it or for any of its candidates.

We now turn to the Republican Party. At the time it came into being (considerably less than twenty years ago) the Democratic Party was sunk into a dead conservatism and into the basest servant of the slave power. The Whig Party became the basis of the Republican Party, notwithstanding it bore quite too much resemblance to the Democratic Party. Happily, however, the Whig Party allowed itself to be leavened by the handful of old uncompromising abolitionists. In this wise was the Republican Party constituted: and the condition of its continued existence and power is that it shall continue to be a Reform Party. Grandly did it begin its reformatory career. It fought for the life of the nation, and saved it: it fought against the guilty rebels of the South and the more guilty rebels of the North, and conquered both: it fought against slavery, and killed it: it fought for the rights of the black man and won them. And it did all this not only without the help of the Democratic Party, but in the face of its determined and unrelenting opposition. Its work is not yet done. What is lacking in the civil rights of the black man it must hasten to supply. I speak not here of social rights. They must take care of themselves. The laws have nothing to do with them. Many other reforms are urging themselves upon its adoption: and, unless it shall soon begin to espouse them, it will die, because of its failure to fulfill the condition of its existence—in other words, because of its failure to continue to be a Reform Party. Ere this the Republican Party should have abolished the franking privilege. Ere this it should have accorded the ballot to woman. The wide step in this direction, taken in the Philadelphia Convention, should be followed up without delay. Ere this, too, the Republican Party should have arrayed Government against the dramshops. For what is the office of Government but to protect persons and property?—and the sum total of all other perils to persons and property falls short of such perils from the dramshops. I ask not that Government shall espouse the cause of temperance, and enact sumptuary laws:—but I insist that it shall be true to itself and protect persons and property, whether in doing so it shall help or harm the cause of temperance. The hope of the country is in the continued ascendency and continued reformatory spirit of the Republican Party:—and, if there be times when, on account of its persistent refusal to adopt some vital reform, we shall feel bound to withdraw from it, the withdrawal should ever be with the hope that it may be but temporary, and may result not in loss but in gain to the Party.

Another Presidential Election is at hand. Whom shall we vote for? In the light of what we have said, we cannot vote for candidates of the Democratic Party, however worthy they may be. Grant and Wilson are my own choice—first, because they are the candidates of the Republican Party and the upholders of its righteous principles, and second, because they are wise and honest men and have especial claims to our votes. Wilson is eminently a friend of the laboring man and the black man. Ably and faithfully, and for many years has he fought their battles, and they will rejoice in this opportunity to vote for him. Admirably qualified is Mr. Wilson to take President Grant's place should it be made vacant by resignation or death.

Emphatically true is it that there are special reasons and of the weightiest nature for voting for President Grant. He saved our country in time of war. He blesses it in time of peace. After a long series of successes and defeats, and in which there were quite as many defeats as successes, and when our country was beginning to doubt of her ultimate success, General Grant was summoned to the supreme command of our armies. His policy of persistence—of continuing to hew his way on the same line, though it should take all summer long to reach victory—was much censured by General Chaseret and other distinguished military men. Nevertheless, it prevailed—He won the final battle. General Lee surrendered, and our divided nation again became one. By the way, the charge of General Grant's severity toward the South is very unjust. The easy terms, on which he allowed Lee to surrender, prove the kindness and generosity of his heart toward the South. I said that he serves us well in time of peace also. He preserves us in amity with all nations. He pursues a friendly and peaceful policy toward the poor misguided Indian; and, though Ku Kluxism is still countenanced by the still pro-slavery and still negro-hating spirit of the Democratic Party, he is fast overcoming it, and bringing its crimes to an end. The vast debt, which the Slavery and Democracy-prompted war brought upon the nation, is fast disappearing under General Grant's Presidency, and this too whilst our taxes are rapidly diminishing.

But it is said that President Grant should retire at the

end of his term, and give place to another. Common sense, however, argues that his having been a good President once is a strong reason why he should be President twice. Thus did common sense argue, when it re-elected Washington the first Savior of his country. Thus did it argue, when it re-elected Lincoln the second Savior of his country:—and thus does it now argue when it is about to re elect Grant the third Savior of his country

It is said, too, that President Grant has made mistakes. In beautifully modest terms does he himself confess it and hope to learn from experience. All men make mistakes. Not even Presidents are exempted from the aphorism that "to err is human." Some of his appointments have turned out badly. So was it with a larger proportion of the appointments of a part, if not, indeed, of all his predecessors. One thing more—all the efforts (and they have been as malignant as incessant) of President Grant's enemies to charge him with money-making motives or with any other corrupt motives in his appointments, have signally failed. But he has given offices to his relatives. Yes, it is true that of the scores of thousands of offices in the gift of the Administration, some half dozen or a dozen have gone to his relatives. He has even allowed his old father to continue to be what a previous President made him, postmaster of a little town in Kentucky. If President Grant has given offices to relatives simply because they were his relatives, he has done wrong. But if it were mainly because being his relatives he could judge better of their qualifications, then, surely, no great blame should attach to him in this matter.

Another charge against the President is that during his Presidency he has accepted presents. The charge is untrue—though, in saying so I do not admit that there would necessarily have been moral wrong in his accepting them. It is true presents were made to him as well as to other successful Generals to express the gratitude and admiration of those who made them: and it is also true that to single him out for blame in the case proves that General Grant is a basely persecuted man. No other General is complained of for doing what he did; and in the case of no other General is it held to be other than entirely innocent and proper.

What, however, shall we do with Mr. Sumner's Speech against President Grant? We cannot make light of it and toss it aside—for Mr. Sumner is, at once, both a great and good man. No one has spoken more frequently or more powerfully for his country and especially for the colored race. He lives to-day in the true American heart: and many generations will pass away before his honored and beloved name shall be forgotten How shall we account for it that such a man should dislike President Grant, whom we should all thank and love and honor, and dislike him too more than any other man dislikes him? Some say he is impelled by revenge for not being put again in the Committee on foreign relations. This is not true—for, long before that, he had revealed to myself and doubtless to others also, his intense dislike of the President. May we not look for the origin (not the extent) of this intense dislike to the different tastes and habits of the two men? Mr. Sumner was born in affluence and bred in elegance. He was moulded in some of the best schools of America and Europe, and by intercourse with some of the most cultured minds in both. He became one of the most accomplished of orators and statesmen.—President Grant, on the contrary, was a poor boy and a laboring man. It is true that for this Mr. Sumner would not despise, nor, at all, undervalue him. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding the great intellectual power manifested by the President, Mr. Sumner would be one of the last men to see in him fitness for statesmanship or for the Presidency. Hence, Mr. Sumner, instead of interpreting the President in favorable lights and with a generous spirit, has been more disposed to follow his steps with criticism and censure. This has become such a habit with him that now, at last, we see him, as in this bitter Speech, hunting for occasions against the President where his candor and dignity should not have allowed him to hunt for them, and finding them where only his disordered vision could find them.

Mr. Sumner speaks of President Grant's insult to Frederick Douglass, and through him to the colored race. The insult exists but in Mr. Sumner's imagination. Certain it is that Mr. Douglass is insensible of it—for he is still the uncomplaining and warm friend of the President. Mr. Sumner says that the President, in inviting the San Domingo Commissioners to dine with him, forgot Mr. Douglass. But Mr. Douglass, though Mr. Sumner speaks of him as one of the Commissioners, was not one of them. Like General Sigel, he had served the Commission in the capacity of Assistant Secretary, and like him, he was not with the Commissioners (Senator Wade, Doctor Howe and President White) when they called "informally" upon the President and were "informally" invited to dine with him.

I will speak of but one other unjustifiable attempt on the part of Mr. Sumner to depreciate the President. He says that Mr. Stanton, our eminent War Secretary, exclaimed: "he (President Grant) cannot govern this country." Doubtless, Mr. Stanton said this—for Mr. Sumner is a man of truth. But who was Mr. Stanton when he said it?—a dying man—"his hands," as Mr. Sumner says, "already clammy cold." Very unjust was it in Mr. Sumner to repeat and lay stress upon these words—very unjust both to Mr. Stanton and to the President. Strange thoughts—thoughts contradictory to the tenor and habit of his whole life—do some times flit through the brain of a dying man. Emphatically so was it in the case of Mr. Stanton—for abundant is the evidence that when he was in health and even down to his fatal sickness, he spoke of the President in terms of exalted praise. These words, which Mr. Sumner has so imprudently and unauthorizedly repeated, should be allowed to weigh nothing either against Mr. Stanton's consistency or President Grant's ability.

Let us, my neighbors, instead of disparaging President Grant, and dwelling on the few errors in his Administration, be thankful that he makes us so wise and safe a President. Very foolish is the man who, instead of enjoying the light and heat of the Sun, spends all his days in mousing after and magnifying the spots upon it.

I close with saying that we must have Grant for our President, a few years longer. The Anti-slavery battle is not yet fought out—nor will it be so long as a single shred of Ku Kluxism remains, nor so long as there are persons, who are deprived, on account of their complexion, of so much as one civil right. Let it not be said that the negro, having gained most of his rights, is content to live without the remainder. The more nearly he gains them all, the more discontented and grieved will he be if any one of them is still withheld from him. Such is human nature.

> "The prisoner sent to breathe fresh air,
> And taste of liberty again,
> Would mourn were he condemned to wear
> One link of all his former chain."

We can trust the Republican Party with Grant at its head to finish this great work which it has begun. But we speak in the light of the past and unchanged character of the Democratic Party when we say that if it come again into power, and with whatever person at its head, the black man will again be outraged—and, if possible, re-enslaved; the national debt be repudiated, or the confederate debt, including the price of emancipated slaves, be assumed and put upon a par with it: and, in short, the half million of lives and five thousand million of dollars expended in putting down the Rebellion and establishing the equal rights of all men will have been expended in vain.

Is there a black man either at the North or at the South, who is inclined to vote the Democratic ticket? He had better die than do it. He had better die than so wrong his race and so wrong us, whose lives have been lives of suffering and sacrifice for the redemption and welfare of his race. Will not William Lloyd Garrison and his fellow laborers have lived in vain, if now, at the last, the black man for whom they have lived, shall turn against them and go over to their and the black man's enemy?

GERRIT SMITH TO HORACE GREELEY.

PETERBORO October 1st 1872.

Hon. HORACE GREELEY,

MY DEAR SIR,

It is surely not for *me* to question the propriety of your being upon an electioneering tour. For, whenever the handful of old abolitionists stuck me up for Governor or President, I not only electioneered for myself, but voted for myself. I confess that I had no sense of modesty to restrain me from either.

I see that the reconcilement of the North to the South is the burden of all or nearly all the speeches with which you enliven and grace your extended tour. It is rightly so. For it is no time, now, to be talking of tariffs and free-trade, nor of any of the common political and economic questions. I would have every other subject than that of the reconcilement of the North to the South excluded from the public mind in this Election. But, whilst I agree with you that this, and this only, is the theme for the hour, I, nevertheless, dissent entirely from your mode of treating it. You call on the Republican Party to be reconciled to the South. But, from the day when General Grant allowed General Lee to surrender on terms so generous, as to melt the rebel army to tears, the Republican Party has been reconciled to the South. Never was a conqueror so lenient as our nation to the conquered. It denies to no one, North or South, the right of suffrage: and to less than two hundred of the pre-eminently guilty amongst the conquered does it deny the right to hold office. Moreover, even these, including Davis, Stephens and Toombs, would have been relieved of this disability, if, at any time, their proud spirit had suffered them to ask for the relief.

I regret to find you joining in this clamor of the demagogues about the "carpet-baggers." How absurd to make the election in the Southern States of Northern immigrants an evidence of the lack of reconcilement on the part of the Republican Party to these States! They elect whom they will just as the Northern States elect whom they will.

In all your pleas for this reconcilement you persist in putting the saddle on the wrong horse. Do, my old friend, do correct this mistake. You know as well as any man that the only lack of this reconcilement is on the part of the Democratic Party toward the colored people. Why, then, should you not say so? I beseech you, by your love of truth and candor and by your life-long advocacy of fair play, to say so. Not even the Presidency could compensate you for suppressing this truth. You idolized Henry Clay. Would that you, too, might say as he said: "I had rather be right than President!" No one knows better than yourself that, for the last half century, the Democratic Party has planted itself immovably against our colored brethren; and that, for much longer than the last quarter of a century, its spirit against them has been little less than infernal. You do not forget its never-flagging and ever-bitter opposition to the abolition of slavery, and how intensely hostile it was to the Freedmen's Bureau and to all other measures for enlightening and protecting the poor Freedmen. You do not forget how inflexibly it contended against granting the ballot and equal civil rights to the black man, both of the North and South: and its persistent cry for "a white man's government" cannot yet have ceased to ring in your ears. Your new friend Voorhees and other Copperheads who are going about with you, still continue to hiss at any other than "a white man's government."

I need not go farther back than the last Presidential Election for damning proofs of the murderous war, which the Democratic Party has carried on against the black man. The sympathies of its candidate for the Presidency with the negro-crushing rebels were too marked to be denied. It was he, who called the New York rioters whilst they were burning colored orphan asylums and hanging and burning colored men: "My friends!" It was he who promised these rioters his best efforts to get the draft stopped—and, this, too, at the most critical period of the war. But if the Democratic Party showed its negro-hating heart in the selection, at that time, of its Presidential candidate, far more emphatically was it shewn in the selection of its Vice Presidential candidate. Only five days before the Democratic Nominating Convention, General Blair wrote his famous letter to Colonel Brodhead, in which he recommended a resort to force and arms to break up the reconstruction of the South and restore to the white man his former exclusive political power. This letter so charmed the Convention and so happily expressed the warm desire of its heart, that its author was put, promptly and unanimously, in nomination for Vice President. Not at all strange is it, but entirely natural, that to this same General Blair, far more than to any other man, belongs the credit of originating this fusion movement of which you are made, so grotesquely and farcically, the figure-head. I say not this in disparagement of yourself—but simply to express my sense of the absurdity of putting a dyed-in-the-wool Republican at the head of the Democratic Party. Nineteen twentieths of those, who have gone into this fusion movement, were Democrats and are Democrats still; and should the calamity of your election befall the country, they will, of course, hold you bound to represent not the republican but the democratic element in this disgraceful compound. They will even go so far as to claim that, by the conciliatory terms of your Letter of Acceptance, you are bound to reverse President Grant's policy toward Kukluxism; to have the monster dealt leniently with under State authority and be exempted from suppression by the power of the Federal Government.

Nor have I spoken of your ludicrous position at the head of the Democratic Party to disparage the judgment of that Party. A more cunningly chosen device than its use of your name for deluding and drawing off credulous republicans there could hardly have been.

Since its virtual espousal of General Blair's bloody plan for getting rid of all negro share in the Government, the Democratic Party has kept on in its war upon the negro. Even in the very last session of Congress, its members voted solidly against extending equal civil rights to the colored race, and against protecting that race from the Kuklux Democratic devils, who spend their nights in prowling through the Southern country, dragging men and women from their beds, scourging them mercilessly, and hanging or shooting not a few of them. The sufferers are to be counted by hundreds and even by thousands.

Pardon me for calling these Kuklux devils democratic devils also. With me, Kukluxism and Democracy are one. Kukluxism is the culmination of Democratic crimes. It is Democracy gone to seed. They are one, because the Democratic Party upholds Kukluxism, and because the single aim of Kukluxism is to terrify persons into voting with the Democratic Party. The moment that any man, black or white, consents to vote the Democratic ticket, his peace is made with the Kuklux devils.

But you will say that the Democratic Party has repented. Where is the proof of its repentance? I see no tears upon its cheeks, no contrition in its spirit. Do you cite me to the Baltimore platform? I answer that a political party platform is not to be taken as proof of the spirit and principles of the party—especially not until the party has adopted it at the ballot-box. Until then certainly, it is to be taken, at least in many cases, as but the cunning contrivance of the leaders of the party for increasing the party. Until then certainly, it is to be taken as a mere profession, the sincerity of which is to be proved or disproved by subsequent practice. The last Republican platform, because essentially like its former ones, created no surprise and awakened no incredulity. But the last Democratic platform, as unlike its predecessors as day is unlike night, and as unlike the history of modern Democracy as justice is unlike injustice, and impartial and fraternal love is unlike the satanic spirit of caste—is not only to be distrusted, but to be scorned and scouted until the Democratic Party shall have given practical evidence of its adoption of the platform.

No, no, my old friend, the Democratic Party, with whose fortunes you have so unwisely linked your own, is not to be taken as having repented. It, surely, did not begin to repent until after its great wickedness in the last session of Congress:—and, pray, what has it done in the few subsequent months to prove its sorrow for its never-ceasing diabolism during the previous thirty or forty years? There needs to be a long repentance for so long a continuance in enormous sins.

No, no, my old friend, the Democratic Party is the Democratic Party still. It remains as unreconciled as ever to the negro. Should it again come into power, the oppression of the negro will be revived, and the work of the war be undone. But, thank Heaven, for the cheering signs that the days of the Democratic Party are numbered. With the reins in his hands four years longer, President Grant will make a finish of Kukluxism: and a finish of Kukluxism will be a finish of Democracy. Kukluxism and Democracy, being one, will die one death, and go into one grave.

With great regard yours

GERRIT SMITH.

GERRIT SMITH TO SUSAN B. ANTHONY.

PETERBORO February 5th 1873.

MISS ANTHONY,

DEAR FRIEND,

So the men talk of putting you in prison for your having voted! They vote; and feel that, in doing so, they discharge a high duty. But they hold that you, notwithstanding your conceded abilities and virtues, and merely because you are a woman, may *not* vote. Why men have the ballot and women hav'nt it, and why they have so much else in which they refuse to let women share, originates in the simple fact, that the superior physical strength is on the side of man. I confess that such things go somewhat toward making me ashamed of being a man. Nevertheless, I am conseled by the thought that when men shall have become wiser and better, and exchanged their barbaric pride in their stronger and rougher sex for a sense of what they owe to the weaker and gentler one, they will be glad to do justice to women—yes, a full, generous, chivalrous measure of justice.

We are constantly told that suffrage is but a conventional and therefore an inferior right. It is, however, an eminently natural and transcendently important one—for it is the right protective of all rights. The chief use of suffrage is in the selection of rulers. Hence, as the office of the rulers is to protect the persons and properties of the people, it follows that they, who have no voice in the choosing of the rulers, have no voice in the question of the protection of their own lives and properties. The disfranchised lie, with their possessions and their lives, at the mercy of those, who have usurped the *exclusive* franchise.

The question is not whether men shall confer the right of suffrage on women. Men assumed it for themselves—and properly so. But they are mean and base tyrants for not suffering women also to assume it for themselves.

Nor should the question have been raised whether women have the right of suffrage in the Constitution. Man's claim to this right was prior to and far above all Constitutions; and the like claim to this right he should have been prompt to recognize in woman. But, alas, Constitutions, being man-made, are made, almost universally, in the interest of defeating and ignoring this claim on the part of woman!

What tyranny and what hypocrisy then for men to say that the Constitution settles it whether women have the right to vote! You have not forgotten how indignantly unwilling a few of us were to have it made a Constitutional question whether our millions of slaves should be set free. The question of their freedom rose heaven-high above all parchments and papers; and so does the question of woman's equal right with man's to participate in choosing the guardians of the rights of person and property—rights certainly no less sacred in woman than in man. Let Constitutions settle questions which fall within their sphere—but let them not presume to decide that one man may own another, nor that men alone may wield the ballot, and thus have the absolute disposal of women. Lord Brougham's grandly eloquent outburst against the possibility of law for slavery applies with scarcely less force to the outrage of man's assuming to be exclusively the maker of laws for woman. I do not say that I would not have Constitutions speak out against slavery and against this oppression of woman: but I would have them do so simply as registering the antecedent decrees of heaven and of every true soul against these abominations.

Rightly interpreted however—interpreted according to the accepted canon of interpretation—the Constitution interposes no hinderance in the way of woman's assertion of her right to the ballot. All this talk about what the framers of the Constitution intended is idle; and so also is all this talk about the intentions of its adopters, save only as they are gathered from the simple words—from the bare text—of the instrument. Moreover, we are to bear in mind, that, whilst, on the one hand, we are to admit no interpretations in behalf of injustice but such as are irresistibly plain, on the other we are allowed and required to wring, if need be, from the Constitution whatever in it makes for justice—especially for such clear and commanding justice as the ballot for woman.

But are the friends of this vital justice to woman driven to the necessity of wringing any thing from the Constitution in order to maintain their cause? Certainly not—for nothing in it is plainer than that every one of our native or naturalized women is a citizen. Then, if we follow this up with looking into our standard American Dictionaries and into the utterances at this point of not a few of our most eminent jurists, we find that suffrage is amongst the privileges and immunities of a citizen.

Let what will be said to the contrary, the moment that the first section of the fourteenth Amendment became a part of the Constitution, our women became Constitutional voters—and, this too, beyond the power of a State to disfranchise them.

But the enemies of this indispensable justice for woman assail her from the seeming vantage-ground of the first section of the fifteenth Amendment. They ask—why, if woman shall not be denied the right to vote, this section does not say she shall not? The answer is that, at the time of the adoption of this section, the absorbing concern of the American people was to make sure, doubly and trebly sure, the protection of the black man—in other words, his right to the ballot. We admit that woman was not thought of in this section. If, however, it be said that she was, then are we at liberty to say that she was thought of not for the purpose of excluding her from its provisions, but thought of only as needing no further Constitutional expression against her disfranchisement. At any rate, there is nothing in this section which can go to defeat the positive grants to woman derived from other parts of the Constitution.

This mere outline of my argument will suffice. I need not fill it up and fortify it at points where it is open to criticism, and where it could easily be filled up and fortified.

But be not discouraged, even though Congress and the Courts shall decide that another Amendment to the Constitution (the Julian Amendment) is necessary ere woman can vote. In that event such an Amendment will be forthcoming. The Republican party, with that wise and honest, brave but modest man at its head, is in power for another four years. It came originally into power by being a reform party. By continuing to be such, it has continued in power: and only by remaining a reform party can it remain in power. The Democratic party, which was the reform party in the early life of the Republic, came, at last, to kill itself by refusing to be a reform party, and by clinging to its sins and crimes. The Republican party has, just now, abolished the franking privilege: and it will, doubtless, soon follow up that much needed reformatory work by according entirely equal civil rights to the black man. (For his *social* rights he must be left to fight his own battles.) Then there are two other reforms with which the Republican party cannot afford to delay identifying itself. One of them is the recognition in woman of all the political rights exercised by man. The other is the arresting of the dramshop ruin of our country by no longer licensing or suffering the dramshop, that great manufactory of all sorts and sizes of criminals. The mighty city of New York lies to-day a helpless victim of the dramshop. From that devil's den comes the far greater share of her thieves and murderers: and hence, also, comes that chief corruption of the public sentiment through which these offenders so generally escape punishment. Dramshop voters and dramshop jurors!—how little safety for either life or property where such wretches abound! Whether America shall preserve her free institutions turns mainly on the question whether she shall stay the rising floods of intemperance. The sole office of Government is to protect person and property: and the dramshop confessedly does more than all things else to peril them. It is then a very plain duty that we ask Government to discharge, when we ask it to suppress dramselling. Let Government do this its simple duty, and the friends of temperance will then be able to do what shall be lacking to save the land from being destroyed by intemperance. Would that this division of the labor might be acquiesced in!

GERRIT SMITH.

LET CRUSHED CUBA ARISE!

Substance of the Speech of Gerrit Smith,

IN SYRACUSE, JULY 4th 1873.

In our Fourth of July celebrations there are two events, which, far above all other events, we come together to celebrate. One of these is the deliverance of our country, nearly a century ago, from political despotism, and the other is the practical recognition by our nation, a few years since, of the grand doctrine that "all men are created equal." I might rather say its practical recognition of this grand doctrine wrought out into the grander fact of the deliverance of four millions of our countrymen from the yoke of slavery.

But how can we best prove to the world that we celebrate these two events in our hearts as well as with our lips? I answer that we can best prove it by showing that we sympathize with those peoples amongst whom this twofold bondage, from which we have escaped, still exists. There are still many such peoples on the earth—many who still suffer from political slavery or domestic slavery or from both. One of these peoples is very near to our country—and this day will not be in vain either to them or to us if we shall use it in kindling our pity and our prayers for them.

The island of Cuba is less than a hundred miles from us. Look at her on the map. She lies at the feet of this great nation; and lies there as it were imploring our mercy. She is, probably, at once the most fertile and beautiful island on the globe. God has dealt very bountifully with her—but man has dealt very cruelly with her. Her vast aboriginal population melted rapidly away under new diseases and under the heavy tasks, which Spanish greed of gain imposed upon it. History says that in the year 1853 not one Indian was left upon the island. Some had escaped to Florida; some had committed suicide. But the most of them had disappeared before wasting toil and sweeping disease. Poor Africa, the prey of christendom for centuries, was taxed to supply the place of the Indians. Negro slavery succeeded to Indian slavery. With the exception of the few brief and small footholds which England and France acquired in Cuba, she has, from the time of her discovery, been ruled by Spain, and invariably by a rod of iron. From year to year, Spain has, under the terrors and tortures of the lash and under other terrors and tortures, drawn from poor Cuba all that she could possibly be made to yield. Spanish hunger has never ceased to feed on Cuban fatness. But it is only in the last five years that the sufferings and sorrows of Cuba have reached their climax. During this period Spain has sent some seventy thousand soldiers to Cuba. These, along with some thirty thousand Spaniards on the island, she has employed to rivet the chains of slavery upon four hundred thousand negroes and to slaughter all, both whites and blacks, who should dare to resist her authority. Cuban diseases and Cuban valor account for the destruction of nearly the whole of these seventy thousand soldiers. Very few of them have lived to return to Spain. On the other hand quite as many of the insurgents have fallen. Spain spares none of her Cuban prisoners: and even women and children do not always escape their murderous rage.

Now, why, in the light of these facts, should we not sympathize with Cuba, and make this fourth of July beautiful and blessed by expressing our sympathy with her? Does the objector say: "Charity begins at home, and that there are enough objects just around us to exhaust our beneficence?" But if charity begins at home, it nevertheless does not end at home. For my own part, I welcome the idea that charity has no home—but is ever on the wing in quest of objects needing her relief and comfort. Say not that the Cuban is not our countryman. The good Samaritan, so far from confining his charity to his countrymen, extended it to those of even a hostile country. By the way, Cuba, by force of geographical position and indissoluble commercial ties, is a part of our country. Is it said that international law forbids our helping the Cuban? If it does, then away with international law. If international law thus wars upon our nature and demands the suppression of its righteous sympathies, then accursed be international law. That is law, which harmonizes with nature. That is no law, which does violence to nature. Strictly speaking, the world has not, as yet, international law. Each nation decides for herself how she shall deal with other nations. But let me here say that I believe there will be, and that too at no distant day, a real international law—one that shall express the joint and just and fraternal sense of all the leading nations.

A few years ago, our Government, whilst sternly denying all favor to Cuba, allowed Spain to build in the harbor of New York and supply with munitions of war thirty gunboats. That they were to be used in carrying on her infernal war against the poor Cubans was as plain as day. Now, if we have laws for this wickedness still in force, then we should hasten to repent of them and to repeal them. But we have not such laws: and, in showing this favor to Spain and this disfavor to Cuba, we went in the face of our laws, and went back upon our better days.

It is true that by our Congressional Statute of 1794 Spain would not be prohibited from fitting out vessels in our waters to be used in subduing her insurgent colony. But in the year 1817 another and very different law on the subject of neutrality was enacted by Congress. The law of 1794 does not mention a colony. But the law of 1817 forbids the fitting out in our waters of vessels to be used against any state or any *colony* with which we are at peace. This law puts a colony on the same footing with a state. It no more allows our waters to be used in a war against a colony with which we are at peace than against an independent state or nation with which we are at peace. The law is perfectly plain. Nevertheless, plain as it is, there are learned gentlemen who seem to insist that it was enacted solely in the interest of the independent state or nation. But the law, not only does not read as they say it does, but the circumstances attending its enactment forbid such a reading of it. What were these circumstances? At the time the law was enacted, the Spanish colonies in America were struggling to cast off the yoke of Spain and to become free and independent states. Moreover, the government and people of our country were warmly

in sympathy with these struggling colonists. How strange, if in these circumstances we should have enacted laws against, instead of in favor of, the colonies! One thing more in this connexion—no other man was so earnest, eloquent and efficient an advocate of the cause of these Spanish colonies as Henry Clay. He has the credit of having carried through this law. Suppose you that he thought it to be a law discriminating against the colonies? Preposterous supposition! It is true that this law was, by its own limitation, to expire in two years. But so well pleased were the American people with its provisions in question, that in one year they were re-enacted in a permanent law, which has neither been repealed nor modified.

Now, why is it that our Government has not lived up to the requirements of its own law? Why is it that it has suffered vessels of war to go from our shipyards against the Cubans, and, this too, whilst sparing no pains to shut out all pity and all succor from these oppressed and outraged brethren? I hope it is for some worthier reason than to propitiate a nation by helping her to sacrifice her colony. Nevertheless, what good reason can we plead for helping Spain to prolong slavery in Cuba and to carry on wholesale murder there?

Why has not our Government accorded belligerent rights to the Cubans? Because, as say some of our statesmen, the insurgents have amounted to no more than a mob. Surely, they are more than a mob, who have carried on a war for nearly five years against a strong and warlike nation, and, this too, with steadily increasing prospects of ultimate success. Surely, a cause, which has enlisted the sympathies of all but a mere handful of the native Cuban population,—a cause, which, during all these years, has maintained a constitutional form of government, and which, at the very beginning of its existence, was honored by a sincere and solemn decree of the abolition of slavery, should not be spoken of as the movement of a mob. And some of our statesmen belittle the progress of the Cubans, and excuse the apathy of our Government toward them, by the cry that the insurgents have no ports. It is true that, although they hold a great part of the island, they have no ports. The Spanish fleet, recruited to our shame from our own shipyards, controls all the ports. Nevertheless, may not the insurgents be recognized as carrying on a war? Our southern brethren carried on a war, yes and a very effective war, against us, although they had no ports—not so much as one port into which to bring a prize. The three or four ports they so bravely and persistingly contended for were so closely blockaded as to be of little or no value to them. In our revolutionary war our fathers had literally no ports. Nevertheless, though England was mistress of the seas, we won from her our liberties. Thus a people, determined and brave, can not only carry on a war without ports, but even a conquering war. A people, more determined and brave than the Cuban warriors, there never were—nor, alas, a people more heartlessly forsaken by a calculating christendom. The nations of Europe recognized the belligerent rights of our revolutionary fathers. Even Spain came to their help—and, this too, though, like the Cubans, they had no ports. Years ago, our Government should have admitted not only the belligerent rights of the Cubans, but their national independence also.

I close with saying that, in this very strange and very sad default of our Government, the people must take the Cuban matter into their own hands. President Grant has repeatedly spoken right words regarding this abominable war of Spain upon Cuba. From every part of the land must come up the cry of the people for right action to follow these right words. Moreover, our whole people should incessantly cry in the ears of thrice guilty, thrice barbarous, thrice bloody Spain, the words of Jehovah to Pharaoh: "LET MY PEOPLE GO! LET MY PEOPLE GO!!" We of Syracuse and its surroundings, who, for half a century, have, quite as much as any other communities, been taught to welcome the solidarity of the human race and the doctrine that every man whatever his clime or color, and be he Cuban or American, is our brother, are emphatically bound to call every people *my* people. Never, until they reached success, did our old abolitionists cease to ring in the ears of the American slaveholder: "Let my people go! Let my people go!!" And never until the Spanish despot and Spanish slaveholder have yielded, should we cease to ring in their ears: "Let my people go! Let my people go!!"

At the close of Mr. Smith's Speech, Alderman Gardner offered the following Resolution:

"Resolved that we deeply sympathize with the oppressed and outraged Cubans, and that we call on our Government to delay no longer to acknowledge their belligerency, if not indeed their independence also."

Mayor Wallace, the President of the day, then put the Resolution to vote. It passed unanimously. From the vast assembly there came not up one dissenting voice.